

**Cairngorms National Park Authority
Supplementary Planning Guidance**

**AVIEMORE DESIGN FRAMEWORK
Consultation draft March 2011**

Planning in the Cairngorms National Park

Planning in the Cairngorms National Park is unique. It involves the Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) working alongside the five local authorities which operate in the Park – Aberdeenshire, Angus, Highland, Moray and Perth & Kinross.

Due to the expansion of the National Park in October 2010, to take in part of Perth and Kinross, different planning policies apply there.

The following paragraphs set out what planning policies apply in the National Park, and how planning applications will be dealt with.

Planning Policies

The Cairngorms National Park Local Plan, and this Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG), cover the Aberdeenshire, Angus, Highland and Moray parts of the National Park only. This SPG sets out detailed advice to help you meet the requirements of the policies in the Cairngorms National Park Local Plan. It is recommended that it is read in conjunction with the policies in the Local Plan and other relevant SPG.

The Cairngorms National Park Local Plan and this SPG does not cover the Perth & Kinross area of the Park. The Perth & Kinross Highland Area Local Plan, or the Perth & Kinross Eastern Area Local Plan, and any associated SPG, apply. Please see www.pkc.gov.uk for further information.

Planning Applications

All Planning applications submitted within the Cairngorms National Park must comply with the relevant Local Plan and SPG (see paragraphs above on planning policies for details).

Planning applications should be submitted to the relevant local authority in the normal manner. The local authority ensures all the necessary information is supplied and registers receipt of the application. The CNPA is informed by the local authority and has 21 days to decide whether to call-in the application. Only applications which are of general significance to the aims of the Park are called-in. The CNPA determines called-in applications. In instances where planning applications are not called-in, the local authority will determine the application.

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I Introduction

- 1.1 This document sets out to update the Masterplan for Aviemore published in 1997, which has been used in the planning process as supplementary planning guidance. In order to meet the development aspirations of the community, key developers and investors in the area, and the relevant public sector agencies, this design guide has been developed. Much has happened in Aviemore since 1997, including decisions on large planning applications for both Aviemore Highland Resort, and the new community on the opposite side of the river Spey at An Camus Mor.
- 1.2 This new document is therefore intended to provide a design framework which will be adopted as supplementary planning guidance, and which will inform and complement the new Local Plan for the Cairngorms National Park.
- 1.3 The development of this guidance has been carried out for the Cairngorms National Park Authority by Land Use Consultants and Studio Kap architects. There are many recommendations included in this document, and your views are sought on them during this consultation phase.

2 Current Situation

- 2.1 This section examines present day Aviemore, its urban form, structure, character zones and circulation patterns. The aim here is to build up a picture of contemporary Aviemore that can inform proposals for future change. Figure 1 identifies the location of Aviemore within its context.
- 2.2 Aviemore was established in the late 19th century as an unplanned settlement associated with the then newly developed Highland Railway. The following diagrams indicate how Aviemore has developed from a small grouping of buildings near the railway station, to a sprawling linear settlement. The main direction of growth has been northwards due to the physical constriction resulting from the alignment of the River Spey and the projecting spur of Craigellachie Hill in the area of the ‘old’ centre and southern part of Aviemore. The presence of Aviemore Highland Resort in the west has also denied opportunities for expansion of the town centre westwards. Consequently there has been little scope for Aviemore to consolidate or expand its original core, and 20th century sub-urban expansion has largely covered flatter areas to the north, north-east and north-west. Through this process the original centre of Aviemore, shown as a black dot, has become increasingly remote from the later residential developments. The result is that many of Aviemore’s facilities are located in the south, requiring significant travel distances for those living or staying in the north of the town.



Spatial development of Aviemore over time

3 SPATIAL ANALYSIS

Figure Ground

- 3.1 Aviemore is not a planned town like its neighbours Granttown and Kingussie and has grown sporadically without the guiding hand of a masterplan until 1997 (after much of the existing town had been developed). Not surprisingly the result is a poorly defined spatial structure which most notably lacks formality and urbanity in its ‘centre’ historic core. The fragmentation of urban form is clearly evident on the figure ground plan below. This shows the lack of urban consolidation in the town centre area where the resort lands dominate with a dispersed pattern of large buildings within open space. This contrasts strongly with the centre of neighbouring Kingussie which has a densely developed and well-defined grid iron structure characteristic of a planned settlement. The figure ground also illustrates how Aviemore’s northern residential developments have lacked strategic scale spatial planning; each period of development a different layout and style from its neighbour with few integrated open spaces, access corridors or linkages. Despite Aviemore’s spectacular highland setting the residential developments are characterised by relatively dense traditional suburban housing layouts where the housing has a poor relationship to the street or to communal space. The result is a settlement with much ‘lost space’ – pockets of land that are relatively unusable and which do not contribute to civic or community conviviality. The scale and density of development in the north, in comparison with the fragmented and loosely developed core, gives cause for concern, since this leaves the centre open to pressure from large footprint commercial developments and associated parking which would prejudice attempts to create a vibrant, welcoming and human scale centre.



Kingussie (left) and Aviemore figure ground plans – note the fragmentation of the town centre in Aviemore compared to the formal structure of Kingussie. The details below show this more explicitly



Visual Qualities

- 3.2 The visual qualities of Aviemore are strongly linked to the natural landscape in the surrounding area. Aviemore is located within an area of high scenic and environmental value. The area to the east of the railway line is designated as a National Scenic Area (NSA): an area “... of unsurpassed attractiveness which must be

conserved as part of our national heritage" (Scottish Natural Heritage 2000). This area encompasses the wild mountainous landscape of the Cairngorms Mountain Range. The Cairngorms Mountain Range forms a prominent backdrop and horizon from many areas in Aviemore. Views to the mountains are essential to the identity of Aviemore and are epitomised by the views eastwards from the Railway Station which reinforce travellers' associations of Aviemore with the Cairngorms. It is evident that many of the town's older buildings were sited and oriented to take advantage of the views to the east, ie located on the west side of Grampian Road facing east, and more recently the Mountain Café and Active cafes' successfully utilise their upper floors to enable unobstructed views to the mountains. Expansion of Aviemore has seen the development of its eastern/ north-eastern areas with the consequence of curtailing formerly unobstructed views. The latter is perhaps unavoidable but unfortunately many recent developments have made little attempt to establish strong visual relationships with the surrounding highland landscape, or to protect important views from within the town.



Views to the surrounding spectacular highland landscape

- 3.3 Close to the town, but unseen from the centre, is the majestic River Spey, important scenically and for nature conservation. Its low lying course and fringe of riparian woodland determines that it can only be seen from closer vantage points. Dalfaber Road provides direct access and views to the banks and bridges of the Spey. There is also an overgrown, informal path that runs near the edge of the Spey. The river's tree line and tributary streams are visible from the town centre. The Aviemore Burn runs along the edge of the northwest residential neighbourhood before cutting through the town centre. The burn flows under Grampian Road, though it is not a prominent feature, particularly for road users. The Grampian Road bridge is heavily disguised and the watercourse is screened by adjacent developments, car parks and vegetation. On the east side of Grampian Road the burn flows within a landscaped public space then via a tunnel under the railway line which is shared by a footpath, one of the few pedestrian access links between the town centre and the River Spey. From the railway underpass / tunnel the burn flows across the water meadows to the Spey. An informal footpath follows its course.
- 3.4 To the south of Aviemore views are channelled through woodland. The dense woodland on both sides of the B9152 defines the road corridor and contains views to the east and west before the landscape opens up to allow expansive views to the Cairngorms.

- 3.5 Close to the western side of Aviemore is Craigellachie, a distinctive birch covered crag that provides a backcloth to the town within views towards the west and south west. Although not particularly high, its proximity and its steepness make it a dramatic feature of the town. The crag rises to over 500 metres above sea level and emerges from the birch forest like a beacon. Views to the crag and its forests are experienced from many parts of Aviemore, including the Grampian Road corridor, and are particularly dominant from within the Aviemore Highland Resort area. Localised areas of high ground within the resort and within the housing areas provide a number of vantage points from which less obstructed views to the surrounding countryside can be obtained, occasionally buildings have been oriented or designed to capitalise on these views.



Aviemore Burn appears as a water feature



A viewing platform caters for train enthusiasts

- 3.6 Aviemore's building layout within the town centre limits opportunities for external views, particularly towards the east. There are relatively few unobstructed gaps on the east side of Grampian Road and this is exacerbated by linear buildings and fences associated with the railway line which create visual barriers. However, there are some valuable vantage points along Grampian Road, including the pedestrian footbridge over the railway and the viewing platform within the Aviemore Burn civic space. The car parks, although not attractive at ground level, also allow unobstructed views from the upper floors of buildings opposite as demonstrated by the Mountain Café. Along the west side of Grampian Road development is generally less linear and there are a number of gaps between buildings and open areas (car parks and green spaces) which offer intermittent views towards Craigellachie and the resort lands.



Elevated views from MacDonald Aviemore Highland Resort

Spatial Analysis: Summary

- Aviemore is not a planned settlement.
- The town's growth has been northwards due to the constrictions of the River Spey and Craigellachie.
- Potential town centre expansion westwards prevented by Resort landuse.
- Town centre is fragmented and lacks strong identity.
- Views to the Cairngorm Mountains are essential as part of Aviemore's identity.
- Craigellachie provides the rugged Highland backcloth to the town.

4 BUILDING ANALYSIS

Building Uses

- 4.1 The evolution of Aviemore from a small village to a town has created distinct areas with isolated uses. To the south, lies Aviemore's town 'centre' and historic core containing mixed use and retail / leisure developments with small pockets of residential buildings. The northern areas of Aviemore are largely residential. A cluster of community buildings are located between the two predominant uses. Aviemore's industrial sector is mainly located within the railway corridor and an additional area runs off Myrtlefield.
- 4.2 As discussed previously, Aviemore has expanded northwards during the 20th century due to the constrictions associated with Craigellachie/the A9 and the River Spey. In doing so, a distinct separation of uses has occurred. The majority of facilities are concentrated in the south while the majority of the resident population is now located towards the north, up to 1.5km away. This is significantly further than the average accepted walking distance (400m/5 minutes) and could consequently create car dependency for accessing facilities and transporting items such as weekly groceries.

4.3 Aviemore contains several civic and community buildings, these include:

- Village Hall
- Primary School
- 2 churches
- Ambulance
- Fire Station
- Health Centre
- British Legion’s Club
- Bowling Green
- The MacDonald Aviemore Highland Resort also has facilities such as a Leisure Centre that is open to the public

Several of the above are located to the north of the town centre and are consequently closer to the main residential areas. The imminent relocation of the primary school to a new site adjacent to the Health Centre will consolidate community facilities in this area. Improved pedestrian and cycle access throughout the length of Aviemore would however be desirable to discourage habitual use of the car by its residents, especially those in the most northerly developments.

Building Heights

4.4 Aviemore’s buildings vary from one storey to 8 storeys. Most of the buildings within the residential zones are 1-2 storeys with the exception of several 3 storey apartment blocks. The taller buildings are found within Aviemore’s town core and the resort area. The highest building at 8 storeys is the Four Seasons Hotel within the MacDonald Aviemore Highland Resort. There are also other hotels within the resort that reach up to 4 storeys. The retail and commercial buildings along Grampian Road range from 1-3 storeys. While there are potential advantages with taller buildings (e.g. able to capitalise on views, more space efficient and cost effective), sadly the taller buildings in Aviemore have been of poor architectural quality, leading to a concern amongst the community that future buildings over 3 storeys will be prominent eyesores. These concerns are understandable but could be allayed by high quality architectural solutions.

Landmark Buildings/Architectural Heritage

4.5 Generally, the architecture that defines Grampian Road is not of a high architectural quality with the exception of a few historic buildings such as the Railway Station, Cairngorms Hotel, Laurel Bank Villa and the other Victorian residences along its west side. The Railway Station is a significant landmark building and as the *raison d’être* for the town acts as an anchor point for the rest of Aviemore. Its importance has recently been reinforced by public realm improvements around the station. The nearby Cairngorms Hotel is a similarly important landmark and in its dialogue with the Station it creates a positive impression at the southern end of the town centre and along the otherwise fragmented Grampian Road corridor.

4.6 More modern landmarks include The Four Seasons Hotel, a visually dominant building which forms part of Aviemore’s skyline from various vantage points. Although the

hotel's architectural merit may be criticised, the building remains a distinct landmark feature within Aviemore and visible from the surrounding area.

- 4.7 Historic Scotland (2006) has listed six buildings within Aviemore (see Table 1). These buildings are considered as having special architectural or historic significance. Their level of significance is defined by a category. Category A relates to buildings of national or international importance. Category B covers buildings that are of regional or local importance and Category C(s) refers to buildings of local importance, which may group well with buildings of higher categories.

Table 1: Aviemore's Listed Buildings	
Building Details	Category
Aviemore Railway Station with Island Platform, Footbridge And Fencing (Grampian Road, Aviemore)	A
Locomotive Shed & Offices (Strathspey Railway, Aviemore)	B
Pine Bank - former Craigellachie House (Dalfaber Road, Aviemore)	C(s)
Cairngorms Hotel (Grampian Road, Aviemore)	C(s)
Glenspey including Boundary Walls & Gatepiers (Grampian Road, Aviemore)	C(s)
Shelter Stone (Grampian Road, Aviemore)	C(s)

Historic Building Characteristics

- 4.8 Aviemore is not well endowed with historic or traditional buildings but the few present are distinctive and characteristic of building in the Highlands during the Victorian period. The villas situated along Grampian road are typical of the more genteel style of building during the late 19th century. They have a relatively simple detached form but carry a range of ornamentation. The basic form of the detached villa is that of a one and a half storey house using dormer windows within the upper floor. The houses generally have a symmetrical elevation using a three bay format with a central front door and gable end chimney stacks. They are generally constructed of grey granite, blond sandstone and local stone rubble. The sandstone is used in dressed and moulded forms to create quoins and margins to doors and windows. Coursed grey granite is frequently used in the main elevations with rubble stonework on the gable and rear walls. The roof pitch is between 40 and 45 degrees from vertical, as is the pitch of the dormers. The roofs have consistently overhanging eaves (c.300mm) with projecting trusses and frequently ornamental bargeboards and finials. Characteristically in Aviemore the roofs are of grey/purple slate. Some villas

have ground floor bay window extensions also roofed in slate and carrying ornamental timberwork and cast iron details. The ornamental timberwork is painted and this is a distinctive feature of the old buildings. In recent years a range of pastel colours have been used which may not be the original ‘Victorian’ choice but are sympathetic. Windows are characteristically of casement type. The use of a shallow arched lintel is a distinctive window detail of some buildings.

- 4.9 Several of the above characteristics are common to other non-residential Victorian buildings in Aviemore, particularly the use of grey granite with dressed sandstone margins, slate roofs, roof pitch and decorative timberwork. The Cairngorm Hotel, adjacent shops and the Church share these details although the buildings differ in form.
- 4.10 Older domestic buildings in the Aviemore area are generally simpler in form and lack the ornamentation of the villas and hotel. Stone rubble buildings occasionally rendered and with steep pitched slate roofs and gable end chimneys are common. These are of single, one and a half and two storey.



Characteristic features of Victorian buildings in Aviemore

5 ACCESS NETWORK

- 5.1 Aviemore's location near the Cairngorm Mountains and accessibility via rail and trunk road (A9) creates an ideal base for residents and visitors alike. The approximate journey time from Aviemore to Inverness is 40 minutes, a moderate commuting distance which has encouraged settlement by those wishing to work in the regional centre but live in the Highlands.
- 5.2 Aviemore also provides an ideal base for those wishing to access many of the National Park's natural and outdoor attractions. A key objective of the 1997 Masterplan was to develop Aviemore as a hub, servicing tourism and recreation activity taking place in the surrounding area. The Cairngorms National Park Plan (2007) recognises that 'transport infrastructure is central to the future sustainability of communities and to meeting the aspiration to be a world-class sustainable tourism destination'. The efficiency of the town's existing transport infrastructure including road, rail, bus and air plays a vital role in achieving this objective.
- 5.3 The journey along roads and railways through the National Park to Aviemore forms an important part of the experience for residents and visitors. The character and quality of key approaches, gateways and corridors have a bearing on how Aviemore is perceived as a 'hub' and 'world-class sustainable tourism destination'. A review of the quality of such features will aid in determining any issues and opportunities that may exist within the existing transport network.

Road Corridor

- 5.4 A combination of arterial roads form key access routes to and through Aviemore, these include the A9, A95, B970 and B9152. The A9 trunk road runs past Aviemore and forms a direct link from Dunblane, off the M9, to Inverness. The heavily used trunk road is in good condition but is subject to congestion due to the high numbers of heavy vehicles and tourist traffic, especially in the summer months. A series of overtaking lanes are sited along the A9 in an attempt to minimise congestion, ensure road safety and reduce delays. The network of B class roads provides a transport link to Aviemore from the A9 and A95 while connecting Aviemore to other communities such as Kingussie, Boat of Garten and Grantown-on-Spey. The roads are in relatively good condition, however, some parts are narrow and winding, creating difficulty for overtaking which can result in driver agitation and road safety issues.
- 5.5 Aviemore is accessible by road from many regional centres and main cities such as Inverness, Aberdeen, Dundee, Perth, Glasgow and Edinburgh. Table 2 identifies the approximate journey time to Aviemore.

Inverness	40 minutes
Aberdeen	2 hours 25 minutes
Dundee	2 hours 15 minutes
Perth	1 hour 40 minutes
Stirling	2 hours 20 minutes

Glasgow	2 hours 50 minutes
Edinburgh	2 hours 35 minutes

- 5.6 Private transportation is the predominant mode of transport within the National Park, with 83% of visitors travelling to the area in a private car. The private bus/coach is the second most favourable mode of transport, with 8% choosing this mode. Furthermore, car and van ownership within the National Park is significantly higher than in Scotland as a whole.

Rail

- 5.7 Aviemore is part of the Highland Main Line between Inverness and Perth. The Inverness-Perth railway has regular services which run through Aviemore to Inverness every day with no seasonal closures imposed. The Aviemore Railway Station is a staffed facility housing a ticket hall, offices, booking office, waiting room, and public toilets with parking in its forecourt area.
- 5.8 The Aviemore Railway Station has three operating platforms. Two tracks service the Highland Main Line, the third is used by the Strathspey Railway trains and is located to the east, on an island platform reached by a footbridge.
- 5.9 Aviemore is the southern terminus for the Strathspey Steam Railway which runs 10 miles north east to Broomhill via Boat of Garten. Steam trains run along the section of the restored line which was originally part of the Great North of Scotland railway route from Aviemore to Aberdeen and the Highland Railway's original main line to Inverness, via Grantown-on-Spey, Dava Moor and Forres. The journey commemorates the area's rail heritage while creating opportunities to take in the scenic views of the surrounding landscape along the line.
- 5.10 The Aviemore Railway Station offers a gateway experience for the commuter. Once you have come up and over the Drumachtor pass the train follows the Spey and affords stunning views of the Cairngorms. The quality of the restored station buildings represent and celebrate Aviemore's historic connection with the rail service. Restoration activities during the 1990s enabled the buildings on the island platform to be demolished due to safety concerns and rebuilt as replicates. Public realm enhancement works were completed in 2009 and these improve the approach to the station along Grampian Road. The opportunity exists to further emphasise the railway station as a gateway through the installation of bespoke Cairngorms National Park entry markers that are in keeping with the station design.
- 5.11 Approximately 8 miles east of Aviemore, is the Cairngorm's funicular railway. The year-round funicular railway carries skiers and sightseers from the Coire Cas ski area to Ptarmigan Station, which is 120 metres from the summit of Cairn Gorm. The Cairngorm's funicular railway is the highest railway in the United Kingdom and gives it breathtaking views of Strathspey and Rothiemurchus.



Northern view from the pedestrian footbridge at Aviemore Railway station



Aviemore's Railway Station, looking south

Bus

- 5.12 *The Cairngorms Explorer: Cairngorms National Park by bus, train, cycle and on foot* provides public transport and non-vehicular travel information for residents and visitors. Numerous bus services operate, including Service 34 Grantown – Aviemore – Cairngorms; Service 35/35A Inverness – Aviemore – Newtonmore and Service 15 Inverness – Grantown-on-Spey – Aviemore, and Service 37 Aviemore – Kingussie High School. Citylink provides bus transport from Glasgow and Edinburgh to Inverness, with a stop in Aviemore.
- 5.13 Bus stops are located along Grampian Road. A bus shelter is located at the Police Station, while other bus stops are simply indicated by a sign. The main pickup and drop off points are the Police Station, Resort and Cairngorms Hotel. The bus servicing Kingussie High School accommodates more areas within Aviemore with bus stops at Burnside, Milton Park, Myrtlefield, the Police Station and the Community Hall.



The style and form of Aviemore's Bus Shelter near the Police Station

Air

- 5.14 Inverness Airport is the closest airport to Aviemore, being approximately 40 miles away. There is no direct bus or rail link between Inverness Airport and Aviemore, and access to these services must be gained from Inverness itself. Similarly it is possible to access bus and rail links to Aviemore from other city airports such as Aberdeen, Glasgow and Edinburgh.

6 Traffic Circulation & Management

Road Hierarchy

- 6.1 The roads and streets within Aviemore can be divided into a basic hierarchy according to their function, capacity and layout.
- 6.2 The arterial roads near Aviemore include the A9 and A95 which carry large volumes of traffic on the outskirts of the town. The arterial roads are of a high-speed nature and a designated turning lane is provided for access into Aviemore. The A9 acts as a physical edge and boundary. There is a minor access road at Milton that runs underneath the A9 road to service the High Burnside housing development.
- 6.3 The collector roads comprise the B9152 and the B970 which collect traffic from Aviemore and provide access to the arterial roads. The B970 also offers connections to the smaller settlements in the area and an onward route to the ski centre. The B9152 becomes Grampian Road, at the gateways to Aviemore. A speed limit of 30mph is applied upon entry to the town. The 1997 Aviemore Masterplan recommended a 20mph zone in order to 'achieve a pedestrian friendly atmosphere'.
- 6.4 Grampian Road is the only north/south through road in Aviemore. It consequently acts as a funnel for local traffic. Grampian Road also acts as the main street with shops and businesses. Three pedestrian crossings are present across Grampian Road. The crossings are 150m apart within the town centre. The next signalled crossing point is 1km north on Grampian Road.
- 6.5 Dalfaber Road and Dalfaber Drive are distributor roads which feed traffic from Grampian Road and the B970 into different areas. Dalfaber Road is a minor distributor road and no-through route due to a gate at its north end. However, Dalfaber Road provides access along the east side of the railway line to the station parking area, storage sheds and residences. In the event that Grampian Road was closed, it may be possible to use Dalfaber Road as a temporary emergency or alternate access route to the north- eastern areas of the town.
- 6.6 Dalfaber Drive is the main east/west road that distributes traffic from Grampian Road to various residential collector roads. The drive acts as a cross neighbourhood link and collects traffic from residential, industrial and recreational areas.
- 6.7 Typically, the various residential collectors are the central roads that lead into Aviemore's residential neighbourhoods. The residential road layouts in Aviemore represent the style and era in which they were constructed. The local neighbourhood roads are mostly cul-de-sacs that branch off from the residential collector roads. These roads carry low volumes of traffic and provide access to building frontages.
- 6.8 The road network within the MacDonald Aviemore Highland Resort follows its own road system. Traffic is channelled from Grampian Road around a one-way loop system with roads branching off to service the various built forms within the grounds.

Gateways

- 6.9 Gateways are thresholds which create a sense of arrival and generate a positive first impression of a place. Gateways into Aviemore are located along the main transport corridors. The gateways by road can be defined as sequential experiences. The first is the welcome signage present upon entering the Cairngorms National Park along the

A9 (from both north and south). The second is the layby with information boards located near the junction of the A9 and the B9152 to Aviemore.



Aviemore's northern gateway



The town centre northern gateway



Aviemore's southern gateway



The town centre southern gateway

- 6.10 The southern gateway entry into Aviemore is located at the B9152 and the B970 junction. The recent construction of a roundabout, installation of distinctive timber columned street lights and use of iconic dry stone walls, provide a sense of arrival and entry to Aviemore. The adjacent 'La Taverna Ristorante and Bar' is also part of this gateway experience by virtue of its decorative character and prominent location. The junction has easterly views to the Cairngorms mountain range. It will be complemented by a dual pedestrian and cycle path which will run from the A9 underpass into the town.
- 6.11 Currently, the northern gateway is interpreted by a single entry sign located on Grampian Road, north of Dalfaber Drive. The timber sign frames an image of a loch surrounded by mountains and snow capped peaks in the distance. Residential rooftops and the surrounding mountains form the backdrop to this approach. This northern gateway is not strongly defined and the progression into Aviemore from the north becomes increasingly 'urban' as one travels south. Initially the Grampian Road corridor has soft landscape margins which become narrower as buildings front the road. Closer to the centre the road is lined by drystone walls then garden walls and buildings.

- 6.12 Thresholds to Aviemore’s town centre are weakly defined by road junctions where access roads for the Highland Resort join Grampian Road. In the north this has a roundabout paved in pink concrete paviors and in the south the junction is marked by a large blue metallic sign relating to the MacDonald Aviemore Highland Resort. Beyond these points are the main town centre facilities and development is denser.

Parking within Aviemore

- 6.13 A combination of on street, off street, public and private car parks are located within Aviemore. Table 3 displays the findings from a recent visual survey within the town core. This indicates that there is generous parking provision within Aviemore, ie a total of over 1000 spaces, however the majority of these are in private ownership and only a proportion are accessible to the public and promoted as such. Nevertheless this initial analysis demonstrates that a very significant area is devoted to parking provision and that through appropriate management and promotion, it should be possible to accommodate the town’s parking needs without additional parking spaces. This would require arrangements to allow (and encourage) public access to existing privately owned car parks, as at the Myrtlefield Shopping complex and at the supermarket. Currently the largest car parks are within the Highland Resort area but these are not signed or promoted for public use from Grampian Road. Neither are there adequate pedestrian links between the resort and the other parts of the town centre.

Table 3: Car parking locations	Approximate number of spaces
<i>On Street</i>	
Along Grampian Road (East)	48 spaces
Along Grampian Road (West)	6 spaces
Grampian Court (residential area)	37 spaces
Spice of India/Riverdale/ThePulse	8 spaces
<i>Off Street</i>	
Behind Bank of Scotland, Julian Graves, Fat Face and Wild Blue	28 spaces, 2 disabled, 1 loading zone
Railway Station (Grampian Road)	1 loading zone, possible taxi rank area
Intersection of B9152 and B970	50 spaces
Cairngorm Mountain Sports	16 spaces
Dalfaber Road (informal)	25 spaces
<i>Customer Parking</i>	
Myrtlefield Centre	83 spaces
Bank of Scotland	4 spaces
Mountain Spirit	6 spaces
Aviemore Outdoor Centre	40 spaces
St Aidan’s Church	20 spaces
Youth Hostel	60 spaces

Table 3: Car parking locations	Approximate number of spaces
High Ranch Motel and Cabins	25 spaces, 2 disabled
RD's Bar and Bistro	16 spaces
Tesco	92 spaces
Coffee Corner/Waterstones/Nevis Sport	7 spaces
Baztex Computers	4 spaces
Cairngorms Hotel	30 spaces
Old Bridge Inn	12 spaces
Dalfaber Road Guest Houses, B&Bs	15 spaces
Grampian Road Bed and Breakfasts	10 spaces
Pinebank Chalets	10 spaces
MacDonald Aviemore Highland Resort	400 spaces, 15 disabled, 20 coaches
Aviemore Railway Station	20 spaces
<i>Pay Parking</i>	
Aviemore Car Park	50 spaces, 2 disabled
<i>Private Parking</i>	
Aviemore Police Station	23 spaces

Pedestrian and Cycle Access

- 6.14 An Outdoor Access Strategy for the Cairngorms National Park was developed and approved in March 2007. The Strategy 'Enjoying the Cairngorms – Outdoor Access Strategy 2007-2012' aims to achieve the following:
- Set out a strategic approach that suits the special circumstances of the Cairngorms National Park;
 - Define policies and priorities on matters relating to outdoor access at a more detailed level than in the National Park Plan;
 - Analyse and explain the most appropriate mechanisms for undertaking work related to outdoor access;
 - Provide a framework for planning the allocation of resources, both by the Cairngorms National Park Authority and partners, over a five year period;
 - Provide the strategic context for the Core Paths Plan.
- 6.15 The CNPA has a statutory duty under The Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 and the associated Scottish Outdoor Access Code to prepare a Core Paths Plan for the National Park. The Cairngorms National Park Authority has prepared the Core Paths Plan. This Plan defines a basic network of paths that will allow visitors and locals to have access throughout the National Park. The core paths are designed to provide opportunities for not only pedestrians and cyclists but also horse-riders and canoeists.

- 6.16 These paths are now well established and used by residents for low level walking and dog walking. A series of signposts and waymarkers direct users around the network. New sections of ‘orbital path’ have been incorporated into several new housing developments to the north of the village, and these provide links to the Speyside Way. However, significant gaps in the ‘orbital path’ still exist to the north and east of the town which diminish the value of this path network.
- 6.17 The Speyside Way is one of four official Long Distance Routes in Scotland, which starts at Buckie and ends in Aviemore. There are proposals in place to extend the path from Aviemore to Newtonmore and this will open up new recreation opportunities between the town and Alvie Estate.
- 6.18 A network of paths has also been developed across the A9 in the woodlands north of Craigellachie National Nature Reserve (NNR). These paths are accessible from Aviemore town centre, and are suitable for walkers and off road cyclists, however access would be improved if there was more specific car parking for the NNR. Options for this need to be investigated. The paths lead up to a sweeping viewpoint at the top of the hill and are popular with families. The Core Paths Plan proposes a new path which links the northern A9 underpass to the existing paths within the Craigellachie NNR. The proposed link would provide a valuable route for people in the north of the town to access the reserve.
- 6.19 Access is also restricted through the Spey Valley Golf Course, however, the proposed extension of the Aviemore ‘orbital path’ to link LBS30 and LBS35 will ultimately create a continuous route around the town.
- 6.20 The Sustrans National Cycling Route No. 7 extending from Carlisle to Inverness passes through Aviemore. The Glenmore Off-Road Route has assisted in linking two existing sections of the cycleway at Inverdrue and Glenmore. There are numerous off-road cycling paths in the Aviemore area catering for a variety of users including mountain bike enthusiasts. The off-road paths allow both visitors and locals to partake in safe cycling activities while exploring the countryside and landscape features such as Loch Morlich and Glenmore Forest Park.

Access Network Summary

- Aviemore is accessible by rail and trunk road, making a desirable commuter settlement and convenient centre for tourism.
- Aviemore is perceived as the recreational hub for the Cairngorms National Park.
- Grampian Road is the ‘spine’ of the town but through traffic is carried by the A9.
- Aviemore has over 1,000 parking spaces but most are privately owned/managed.
- Aviemore is on Sustrans National Cycling Route 7 and the Speyside Way long distance route.
- Aviemore has a substantial path network including an partial Orbital Route;
- Pedestrian access between the town centre and the northern housing areas requires improvement.

7 STREETScape AND PUBLIC REALM

Existing Surfaces

- 7.1 Aviemore has a relatively simple palette of materials within its public realm. Bitumen paths and carriageways with concrete kerbing are predominant. However, some developments have locally introduced feature paving.
- 7.2 Within the town centre, feature paving is present outside the main shops at the Aviemore Shopping Centre, which uses coloured 500x500 concrete slabs and the Royal Bank of Scotland which uses paviors in a herringbone pattern. The Leisure Centre within the MacDonald Aviemore Highland Resort has random cut flagstone paving in the entrance area. River stones set in concrete have been used in a number of locations as kerbs and rockwork features within planting beds.
- 7.3 The above treatments are c.10-15 years old and more recently streetscape improvements have been undertaken around the Railway Station. These have introduced high quality natural stone pavements including granite kerbs, 600x400 flagstones and narrow granite setts.
- 7.4 Carriageways and parking bays are mostly surfaced in asphalt/bitumen macadam. The MacDonald Aviemore Highland Resort uses raised pedestrian crossing ‘tables’ which act as thresholds within its road network. The supermarket has incorporated a rumble strip at the entrance to the car parking area. Residential areas such as Croftside and Dalnabay apply block paving to the carriageway, paths and driveways. The Lochan Mor character area uses a mix of coloured concrete blocks to differentiate parking areas and raised thresholds. The McInnes Place character area uses planted thresholds which narrow the road and reduce vehicular speed at intervals.

Boundary Features/Structures

- 7.5 Many of the older properties in Aviemore were and remain enclosed by masonry walls, some with ornamental gate pillars. Over the last 10 years drystone walling has been introduced to other sections of the Grampian Road corridor in an attempt to provide visual consistency and spatial definition. While this has generally been successful, and significant progress made, the stone walling along Grampian Road is inconsistent in style and materials. The stone walling theme has also been adopted as entrance features e.g. at the Four Seasons Hotel, the Croftside residential character zone, and in the technology park. These isolated gateway walls and pillars are not part of an established boundary or pre-existing walls and therefore appear incongruous. There are also numerous other boundary treatments along the Grampian Road corridor, generally becoming more informal towards the north. These are mostly timber fences of various heights and styles but some are metal rails as at the Cairngorm Hotel.
- 7.6 Other structures within Aviemore’s public domain include handrails, barrier fences and floral structures. An inconsistent range of handrails is present. These include ornate structures and galvanised tubular rails. Pedestrian safety barriers are located at the kerbside in a number of locations along Grampian Road, eg at the Royal Bank of Scotland. The supermarket external spaces have a number of metal structures including trolley shelter (and magnetic platforms) and stainless steel tubular handrails. The housing areas of Aviemore generally have timber fence enclosures and these

differ considerably from one scheme to another. They include low horizontal and vertical bar fences, close boarded palisade fences, high horizontal board fences and post and wire fences.

- 7.7 Grampian Road has tiered flower structures with a blue painted finish within parts of the public realm. The Resort's conference centre has Kopper log triangular planter beds.

Lighting

- 7.8 There appears to be no coherent lighting scheme within Aviemore. The majority of street lights along Grampian Road are of a tall, simple form with blue painted columns and hanging baskets attachments in the commercial areas. Recently more contemporary high quality light fittings have been introduced in the areas subject to streetscape enhancements. These have timber columns and cantilever mounted lanterns. They are locally distinctive but currently limited in their distribution. Lighting within the resort and amongst the residential character areas varies. Multi-coloured columns and lamp heads are present within some new developments such as Lochan Mor and Corbett. There is consequently a need to introduce more consistency into Aviemore's external lighting. This should reflect the hierarchy of the streets and the local character but there should also be common design themes to help reinforce the identity of the town as a whole. Lighting should also be coordinated with the other street furniture components.

Furniture

- 7.9 Street furniture is present along Grampian Road, within the MacDonald Highland Resort and residential parks. The previous use of blue paintwork on furniture within the Grampian Road corridor appears to be a deliberate theme, although this has not been used in recent public realm works where the use of timber and neutral metal frames have been selected. Green plastic salt grit containers are also present. The Aviemore Highland Resort has adopted a coordinated stainless steel and timber bench and bin set. Very few of the amenity spaces have street furniture. The residential neighbourhood parks have a mix of street furniture and some play equipment. These open spaces are discussed further in 'Green and Open Spaces' Section.

Signage

- 7.10 Aviemore has several different types of signage. Pedestrian/cyclist directional signage uses a timber column with coloured cast metal 'fingers' radiating from the top. Representative images, destinations and walking times are depicted on the finger signs.
- 7.11 Metallic lattice interpretive signs with illustrated boards are located at the Aviemore carpark and at the Activity Booking Centre. The sign boards have faded badly and are now illegible.
- 7.12 Retail and commercial buildings along Grampian Road have signs mounted to the fascias or have freestanding timber signs. Many of the latter were specially commissioned and have 3 dimensional relief images enamelled or colour stained. The best examples are at the Myrtlefield shops where each business is represented by distinctive signs. This type of sign conveys a Highland/' Northern Territories' character. The MacDonald Aviemore Highland Resort has its own signage scheme.

The signs are blue and white (generally metal sheet or plastic), rectangular boards mounted on posts. The signs mark the entrances to the Resort and provide directions to the resort facilities from Grampian Road and from the resort's internal roads. A number of temporary advertisement signs are also present along the Grampian Road corridor, these include fabric signs and makeshift plastic signboards.

- 7.13 The residential areas have freestanding yellow enamelled metal panels mounted on posts at the entrance to the streets. Occasionally these signs are mounted to the building façades.
- 7.14 These variations contribute to the fragmentation of Aviemore's character and identity. There is a need to develop a signage strategy which encompasses all types of sign, both public and private. This should result in a coordinated but versatile suite of signs which can reinforce a single identity for the village. Such a strategy was developed by Loch Lomond & Trossachs National Park for the whole Park.

Soft Landscape Features

- 7.15 Much of Aviemore's soft urban landscape is of fairly recent origin (post 1960) although some notable mature trees remain in the vicinity of the Cairngorm Hotel and former Station Hotel site, now the Four Seasons Hotel parkland and access road. Unfortunately several of the gardens pertaining to the Victorian Villas have been turned into car parks with the loss of trees and ornamental vegetation. Within the public realm soft landscaping features have been used to soften the streetscape, create pedestrian scale spaces, act as a buffer to transport corridors and screen or separate various areas. The woodland areas within the Dalnabay character zone act as a buffer and separate the two developments into a series of cells.
- 7.16 Myrtlefield uses planting to accommodate changes in level, while the supermarket and the resort use planted embankments as a means of softening car parking areas and building facades. Raised beds are located to the front of Haddows and the Aviemore Shopping Centre. The later comprises concrete brick paviors with small trees and potted plants. The raised bedding area at Haddows contains large feature stones, a gravel infill and barrels with potted ornamental plants. A common theme around Aviemore is the use of feature boulders and barrel planters in garden areas. Large stone boulders and tree planting are used as a screen to conceal the carpark on Grampian Road and to create a pocket park along the Aviemore Burn between Grampian Road and the railway. Flower baskets hang from street lighting and from buildings within the town centre.

Civic Spaces/Amenity areas

- 7.17 There is no town square or similar civic space within Aviemore. A small garden/events area has recently been constructed, north of the Cairngorms Hotel. This space includes a small performance area and is enclosed by mature trees. It is central to Aviemore, but is shaded and visually contained. It is also too small to accommodate major events. A war memorial is located on Grampian Road. The memorial space is defined by a bollard and chain perimeter and has concrete pavers and tiered flower pots. The area is predominately grass with trees lining the road.
- 7.18 Mown grass areas and verges are common features in Aviemore. There are numerous small grassed spaces within the residential areas many of which are vacant and devoid of interest. These appear to be little used for recreation or social

interaction and have limited nature conservation value. The Corbett character area is more positive in these respects, its development wraps around a small neighbourhood greenspace which includes both amenity grass and planted areas to the fringes.

Streetscape and Public Realm Summary

- The town centre as a whole lacks unity of character or distinction in its public realm treatment.
- With the exception of the recently completed public realm works at the Station, Aviemore has utilitarian surface treatments.
- The extensive use of concrete block pavements in housing areas has compounded their sub-urban character.
- Boundary features are extensive and prominent but lack consistency in quality and condition.
- Street lighting is also inconsistent, most notably along the Grampian Road Corridor.
- There is sparse furniture provision in Aviemore which limits the amenity of open spaces and access corridors.
- Earlier strategic approaches to signage have been replaced by a seemingly ad hoc system, resulting in inconsistency of style/size/quality and insensitive locations.
- Native planting, especially Birch and Scots Pine woodland, is an important characteristic of Aviemore.
- There is potential to improve the usability of civic and amenity spaces.

8 GREEN AND OPEN SPACES

- 8.1 Aviemore has a range of green and open spaces. The open spaces include:
- Playing fields
 - Neighbourhood Park
 - Pocket Parks
 - Semi-Public Open Space
 - Private Gardens
 - Green Shelterbelts
 - Natural Open Space and Countryside
- 8.2 Aviemore’s current playing fields comprise a football field and children’s play area with a woodland shelterbelt running along the railway edge. The park is located behind community buildings and residential streets. It is the site for the new primary school and as its development will remove the playing fields there is a need to compensate for this loss. The Community Council has expressed an ambition to create a significant new park/green corridor along the sides of the River Spey occupying both banks. This would be large enough to accommodate soft recreation areas and to develop the public access network. It would also provide opportunities for nature conservation and create a significant new attraction within Aviemore for visitors and residents alike.
- 8.3 Aviemore’s neighbourhood parks are generally found in the heart of residential developments. These parks contain some seating, bins and children’s play equipment. There are limited facilities for older children.
- 8.4 Aviemore’s pocket parks are small areas that are accessible by the general public. These parks are primarily used for passive recreation, have resting areas or provide areas for biodiversity.
- 8.5 The largest parcels of Semi-Public Open Space are the MacDonald Aviemore Highland Resort and the Dalfaber Golf Course and Country Club. The resort contains expansive grassed areas, a children’s play area and an underpass access to the Craigellachie Nature Reserve. The Dalfaber Golf Course and Country Club has a golf course and outdoor tennis courts. Walkers and non players are permitted to enter the grounds but must stay off the greens and fairways.
- 8.6 Most of Aviemore’s residential properties have private gardens. These generally contain small lawns and ornamental planting, which adds variety to the street scene. The private gardens are enclosed by perimeter fencing or hedges, however some gardens meet the footways with no property line definition. Some private gardens within the Cairngorm Character Area have long plots to the rear which have allowed the establishment of large vegetable gardens.
- 8.7 A number of woodland belts cut through and enclose Aviemore. These include remnants of natural (birch dominated) woodland, mature stands of Scots Pine and more recent shelterbelts of mixed mostly native species. The latter occur along Grampian Road to the north, along parts of the railway line and between various residential developments. The shelterbelts offer green amenity, a transition zone

between areas and create wildlife corridors. The public access network runs through some of these shelterbelt areas providing passive recreation and outdoor experiences.

- 8.8 Aviemore is surrounded by Highland countryside comprising both agricultural land and natural/semi-natural landscapes. This open space resource is readily accessible from the town and the recent developments of the path network have improved this situation. The Aviemore Orbital path is particularly important in this regard and the potential future development of the ‘Spey Park’ could further improve the amenity and management of the town’s peripheral green space.
- 8.9 Aviemore’s green spaces are tied together by the green shelterbelts and access routes. Although most residences have private gardens, there are few neighbourhood parks and communal spaces for outdoor interaction. Community interaction is reliant on Aviemore’s access network which connects these open spaces and offers links to the surrounding countryside. There is the potential to improve the access along the River Spey and to the resort.

Green and Open Spaces Summary

- The proposed school development will result in the loss of the existing Town Park.
- There is no strategic pattern of open spaces and amenity areas.
- There is scope to improve the amenity and biodiversity of Aviemore’s open spaces, especially within the housing areas.
- There is scope to extend and improve green access corridors.
- Native woodland pockets and belts are important spatial divisions, and wildlife resources.
- Native woodlands, particularly Birch and Scots Pine, are characteristic of Aviemore.
- The River Spey corridor is currently an underused asset for Aviemore.

9 CURRENT ELEMENTS OF CHANGE

1997-2007: THE PREVIOUS MASTERPLAN AND TEN YEARS OF CHANGE...

Aviemore Masterplan 1997

- 9.1 The Aviemore Masterplan was prepared in 1997 in response to the deteriorating economic and visual quality of the town and the need to develop a framework from the redevelopment of the town. The Masterplan identified the key problems of the town as being:

‘Shifts in market taste and failure to re-invest, coupled with uncoordinated fringe development, has seen Aviemore lose its gloss and appeal. What started out as an economic success story has become physically tarnished to such an extent that it is now something of an embarrassment and is being avoided by certain sectors of the market. The losses in terms of jobs and the quality of built environment have reached a point where it has been realised by all that drastic action is required if continued decline is to be averted.’

- 9.2 In order to address these problems, the Masterplan sought to promote the economic regeneration of the town as a mountain resort through making the town centre of Aviemore a more visually attractive place. The Masterplan aimed to achieve this through incorporating high quality design into the existing townscape fabric and developing an overall architectural theme for the redevelopment of the town.
- 9.3 In order to make Aviemore a more visually attractive place, the Masterplan also sought to transform the image and texture of Aviemore through ‘greening up’ the town and restoring links with its setting and wider environment. Furthermore, the Masterplan recommended improving traffic circulation, parking and serving arrangements whilst giving over more of the town centre to pedestrians. The overall vision of the Masterplan was to create an urban form which is both visually and environmentally sustainable.
- 9.4 The Masterplan also recognised that the historical separation of the Aviemore Centre (now the Highland Resort) and the remainder of the village core centred along the Grampian road was socially divisive and unfavourable to business. The Masterplan therefore sought greater integration of these two areas through the creation of a new concentrated town centre.

The Masterplan focused on the role of Aviemore as a service hub for the surrounding area and recognised the need for the town, if it is to be a successful tourist resort once more, to provide a range of accommodation and facilities. The Masterplan therefore identified the need for a long-term tourism strategy to guide the continued development of the town.

Progress on the Ground

- 9.5 It is now appropriate to consider the extent to which the vision has been achieved and whether these key principles have been reflected in Aviemore’s re-vitalisation. Which elements of the Masterplan have been successful and which elements less so?
- 9.6 There has been considerable progress in implementing the objectives of the 1997 Masterplan. A key objective of the Masterplan was to develop Aviemore as a hub, servicing the tourism and recreation activity taking place in the surrounding area.

Many of the recommendations relating to tourist accommodation, facilities, eating and drinking and retailing have been realised and the village has grown into a small town. The Aviemore Centre has been redeveloped as the MacDonald Highland Resort with hotel, conferencing, spa and retail facilities, and links to a wide range of recreation providers in the surrounding area. Other changes include the opening of a bunk house serving the economy and outdoor activity market. The town's retail centre has been transformed, with an improved range of shops, many geared to the needs of visitors. The town now includes several outdoor equipment shops, clothes retailers and a bookshop. There is also a much wider range of places to eat and drink, with a number of independent operators contributing to the enhanced identity of Aviemore.

- 9.7 The physical environment of the town has also improved. The previously fragmented settlement character has been tackled by a programme of streetscape and signage improvements. The streetscape strategy has focused on the construction of granite, dry stone walling along much of Grampian Road, the technology park and as an integral part of many new developments. This has been effective in tying together the very different styles of development associated with phases in the settlement's growth. It also contributes to a new sense of local visual identity which was previously lacking. Recent projects at Aviemore's southern gateway and in front of the station have further enhanced the image of the town and set a benchmark for further public realm improvements.



Improvements to Aviemore's physical environment



- 9.8 Aviemore’s signage has been developed to provide much more information for visitors but also to contribute to the ‘highland’ character of the town. Finger posts with a bespoke family of symbols are now provided at key locations. Local businesses have been encouraged to adopt a distinctive ‘Northern territories’ style of signage which now prevails throughout Aviemore and is being adopted elsewhere in Strathspey. Again, this creates unity and character where these qualities were absent.
- 9.9 The need to strengthen and diversify the local economy has been reflected in the opening, in 2003, of the Cairngorms Technology Park which currently accommodates a 20,000 square foot office building, and the development of new businesses such as the Cairngorms Brewing Company which has premises on the Dalfaber Industrial Estate.
- 9.10 Aviemore has also experienced – and continues to experience – significant growth. A series of new housing developments have taken place in the northern part of the town. A common criticism of post war housing developments in Aviemore (as in many Scottish towns and villages) relates to the adoption of building designs and materials which contrast with the local vernacular (for example in terms of scale, form, roof angle, fenestration, roof and wall materials) and which are undistinguishable from schemes elsewhere in the UK. Recent developments represent a considerable improvement, adopting modern interpretations of traditional styles, though some of these are clearly bolted on to more mainstream building designs. Less successful, perhaps, has been the adoption of modern suburban housing layouts (gardens, boundaries, parking areas, roads and footways) which whilst reflecting contemporary standards, tend to contrast with the tighter urban form found in other Speyside villages. The developments also tend to be rather introspective, with houses backing onto bordering roads and paths. ***A new set of design principles are required to steer developers down a more place specific route rather than applying generic designs to this unique place.***



Post-war commercial developments

- 9.11 Similar design issues relate to commercial buildings. A number of post war commercial buildings are of intrinsically poor architectural quality, contrasting with the fine legacy of Victorian buildings. Some may be candidates for replacement or reworking, others may prove more difficult to address. While a number of newer buildings have been designed more sympathetically, the ‘vernacular’ features are often oversimplified (for example the Bank of Scotland building) and applied to just one or two elevations. Plans to redevelop the existing Tesco site, in the centre of the village raise the prospect of significant change (which could be positive or negative) in one of the most sensitive and strategically important sites in Aviemore. By contrast, some new buildings raise the design standard. The new Leisure Arena pool in the MacDonal Highland Resort provides an indication of the standard of contemporary design that should be expected in Aviemore.



Architectural attempts to tie in the vernacular

- 9.12 While the development of the path network has improved access for people on foot and bikes, there is a lack of linkages to the south of Aviemore’s centre and poor linkages to the west into Craigellachie NNR. The concentration of residential development to the north of the town and the location of key retail and community facilities towards the south, means there are likely to be implications for the way the town functions. Development to the west of the A9 and at An Camus Mor will add to this challenge.



New development and expansion in the north of Aviemore

Conclusions

- 9.13 It is evident that Aviemore today is a very different place from that considered in 1997. The emphasis of environmental, social and economic policies has also changed. This document provides the opportunity to take stock and to review the successes and failures of the past 10 years. It is necessary to build on past progress whilst responding to new priorities and new opportunities. Such continuity is also

important in maintaining the confidence of investors, operators, the community and other partners who have contributed to Aviemore's revitalisation, thus far.



10 SWOT ANALYSIS

10.1 This section results from the findings of the consultation process in combination with the desk and site based research. The SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) chart is used to summarise the findings of the survey and consultation work:

Strengths

- location + Highland landscape setting
- accessibility by road + rail + station in centre
- Victorian heritage
- economic renaissance in last 10 years
- freedom to develop and adapt to change
- still has recognisable village centre
- diverse economy – AHR, shopping, leisure, business park
- location in the National Park – the Park’s largest settlement, and a centre for many summer and winter visitors
- direct relationship to surrounding landscape – rivers, burns, woodlands + topography all impact throughout the town
- existing positive developments as a result of 1997 Plan:
 - dry stone wall projects
 - streetscape
 - civic space projects
 - signage projects

Weaknesses

- generally poor/mediocre standard of architecture over last 30 years
- generic and weak pastiche developments detract from distinctive identity
- suburban character of residential areas fails to integrate with the surrounding landscape
- town is sprawling to the north with resultant poor connections to the town centre facilities
- distances between the main residential areas and the town centre encourages car use
- lack of east west connections means fragmentation between centre, housing, AHR, the river etc
- previous developments within the Aviemore Highland Resort are a constraint to the planning of a cohesive masterplan
- pedestrian environment and network poor
- street furniture, signage and street lighting are uncoordinated

Opportunities

- Aviemore’s character and amenity could be reinforced by strategies for:
 - appropriate landscape design
 - appropriate streetscape design
 - pedestrian networks
 - links to the wider landscape
- additional major developments can be used to shape positive change and reinforce Aviemore’s identity as a sustainable and progressive Highland town
- more emphasis on town centre landscape elements such as Aviemore Burn, will help to reinforce linkages with the surrounding Highland landscape and create a stronger identity for the town
- town centre gap sites could be key to definition, distinctiveness and identity; the redevelopment of the existing supermarket site is a critical opportunity to radically improve the image of Aviemore; it will however demand a high quality architectural solution
- a co-ordinated approach to public realm design could reinforce the town’s character and identity
- The River Spey corridor and adjacent green spaces are an underused resource which could be managed and developed as a significant ‘park’ for Aviemore and An Camas Mor, and extension to the town’s orbital access network

Threats

- reactive rather than proactive planning means its very hard to stick to masterplans and strategies, suggesting an emphasis on principles and process rather than blue-prints
- failure to secure high calibre architectural design services for the key remaining development sites could be detrimental to the image and identity of Aviemore, ultimately prejudicing the vision for the town
- commercially led attempts to deliver inexpensive/basic buildings will fail to match the environmental qualities and aspirations of the town, fail to attract users/tourists and ultimately prove to be a false economy
- the recent ‘breach of A9’ – could be a precedent for more sprawl?
- pressure for northwards development could reduce activity in the town centre, or increase car dependency, unless pedestrian linkages are improved
- lack of east – west connectivity exaggerates linear development patterns

II VISION STATEMENT

- 11.1 This section defines the potential future role and identity for Aviemore as an important settlement within the Highlands of Scotland and the Cairngorm National Park.
- 11.2 Ongoing work is taking place with the community in Aviemore to develop a community vision. It will have a key role to play in this guidance and will be incorporated following the consultation on this document.
- 11.3 The vision is expressed as aspirations for Aviemore's role, identity and form within the following paragraphs. The Vision statements are supported by associated objectives and these are addressed further within the following sections which provide planning and design principles and guidance.

AVIEMORE: A NATIONAL ROLE

- 11.4 ***Aviemore will be a nationally significant centre for sport, outdoor recreation and education, utilising the outstanding natural resources in the surrounding area. It will have a supportive role to play for both the 2012 Olympic Games and the 2014 Commonwealth Games. It will benefit from strong and useful links with other centres in the area such as Glenmore Lodge. Aviemore will consolidate its role as the main settlement within the Cairngorms National Park and will be recognised as one of the National Park's key assets in terms of unique character, facilities, services, attractions and accessibility. It will respond to its nationally important landscape setting and provide a key access point to the mountains and forests of the Cairngorms massif, Glenmore and the Spey valley. Aviemore will provide a focus for further education (possibly concentrating on sports education, and outdoor education) and these educational facilities will also be of national quality and accessible to other universities for summer schools etc.***

Key objectives

- 11.5 The key objectives are those changes required to achieve the vision:
- Aviemore will require the development of national quality sporting facilities that can support/complement activities in the local natural environment and that can be used for training for athletes at an international level.
 - Aviemore will require links and a developing relationship with national sporting organisations which use or could use Aviemore's highland landscape and associated outdoor facilities.
 - Aviemore will require the development of an outpost of a significant academic institute such as the University of the Highlands.
 - Aviemore will require links and a developing relationship with national educational organisations.
 - Aviemore will require these new elements to be centrally accessible and with strong links to public transport and main road corridors.

- The town centre will need to develop further to accommodate these additions, in terms of aesthetic quality, services and character.
- A network of cycle paths and pedestrian routes will need to be formally developed to a national quality, which link these new additions with the station, the town centre, the wider landscape and any other facilities including the proposed new settlement at An Camas Mor.
- Additional permanent and visitor accommodation and parking will be required.

AVIEMORE: REGIONAL SIGNIFICANCE

11.6 *Aviemore is a major economic, employment and residential hub for the Highlands attracting a strong population of locals and incomers who are attracted by local employment and good public transport links to Inverness, as well as excellent local facilities, quality of life and local character. Aviemore is no longer a village but a growing town. Aviemore is also a service hub for the surrounding settlements and those who live in or visit them. Aviemore is a key stop off place along the A9 offering a range of good facilities that will encourage further, longer visits in the future. As such it is a beacon for the National Park. It is also a day trip, short break and longer holiday destination in its own right. Aviemore enjoys a mutually beneficial relationship to the settlements of Badenoch and Strathspey, where community and visitor facilities may be ‘shared’ between the settlements ensuring a flow of people, money and activity between them that is mutually beneficial.*

Key Objectives

- 11.7** The key objectives are those changes required to achieve the vision:
- Aviemore needs to develop a unique character based on the positive aspects of its history as a purpose built resort town. It should embrace and celebrate its differences from the other settlements, since these potentially liberate it in terms of growth and development.
 - Aviemore should use its relative freedom from ‘historic and cultural heritage’ to develop as an exemplar for contemporary architecture, technology and sustainability. This should apply not only to the architecture but to all elements of built form including civic space and landscape.
 - To support its role as a regional centre and a beacon for the National Park, alternative transport is required that can reduce the use of private motor vehicles in the town centre; this should also connect Aviemore to An Camas Mor, and the other settlements.
 - As Aviemore develops from a village to a town of regional significance, it requires new and better community facilities which will be used on a regional level. These might include places that offer theatre/performance/exhibition space; visitor facilities; library; arts centre; regional sporting facilities. These will benefit visitors, locals and residents and lengthen the tourist seasons.
 - As Aviemore develops in size and complexity it also requires civic spaces both indoors and out, such as a public park, a town square and possible all weather

facilities such as Winter Gardens. These will benefit visitors, locals and residents and lengthen the tourist seasons.

- Aviemore’s identity should be unified and reinforced at several levels. This should include all aspects of the public realm which should be enhanced as befitting a regional centre, providing high quality facilities, conveying confidence and helping to make the town distinctive and attractive as a visitor destination.

AVIEMORE: A DISTINCTIVE AND WELL STRUCTURED SMALL TOWN

- 11.8 *Aviemore will be a compact and well structured small town benefiting from well designed pedestrian and vehicular circulation, together with visual and access links to the surrounding countryside. It will have a strong and, unique sense of place determined by a proactive and creative approach to local planning, master planning and by the design of buildings and outdoor spaces. It will have a vibrant, modern town centre providing an exciting contrast to neighbouring settlements. The town centre will offer retail, hospitality, sporting and community facilities in a distinctive and place-specific setting. There will be a strongly developed Aviemore vernacular that takes inspiration from the best of alpine/mountain resort design, the local ecology, sustainability and the surrounding National Park landscape, as well as to the Highland vernacular. This will all be expressed through building layout, architectural form, a well defined palette of materials and colour, streetscape, landscape, furniture and signage design. Pedestrian activity will take high priority with traffic flow and parking being consolidated and organised discreetly. The town centre will be accessible by a web of paths linking residential areas to the north and south, and east to the new settlement of An Camas Mor. A strong network of green corridors and extensive use of native planting will help to integrate the town with its highland landscape. Aviemore will also have an integrated relationship with An Camas Mor, the two settlements being mutually accessible by public transport, foot, bike or car and sharing a green heart in the Riverside Park.***

Key Objectives

- 11.9** The key objectives are those changes required to achieve the vision:
- Aviemore requires re-establishment, integration and consolidation of its town centre, including the Aviemore Highland Resort lands, the Aviemore Burn, Grampian Road, the Station and the approaches to the River Spey (and An Camas Mor beyond).
 - All national, regional and community facilities should be located as centrally as possible, (with the exception of neighbourhood facilities such as pocket parks, trails and corner shops which should be located in outlying neighbourhoods). An Camas Mor facilities serving both communities should be located where it is also possible to make them accessible to the people of Aviemore.
 - The town centre section of Grampian Road should ideally be lined with a wide range of distinctive and individual shops, businesses, catering outlets and cultural facilities. It should become an attractive, useful and interesting place to visit,

browse and shop. Emphasis on local produce/crafts, mountain sports and local culture would reinforce the image of the town.

- The town centre section of Grampian Road needs to become a vibrant and distinctive 'street' with human scale spaces and architecture with high quality buildings supporting a variety of shops and services. The quality of the architecture should become a part of Aviemore's identity and attraction.
- The town centre requires high quality, flexible civic spaces capable of accommodating events, markets, and gatherings in addition to general pedestrian amenity.
- The town centre section of the Grampian Road corridor should be distinguished by high quality public realm and streetscape which extends into the adjacent civic spaces.
- The land between the Highland Resort and Grampian Road needs to offer an extension to the town centre environment, and to create a seamless link between what are currently two separate entities.
- Key east-west links need to be reinstated linking the town centre westwards to the Aviemore Highland Resort lands and east to the Spey and to An Camas Mor.
- The town centre requires a good green space – a public park – for informal recreation to complement the sporting and outdoor activities the town is there to support. This should contain elements of covered space that allow for the continuation of winter and all weather activities.
- There should be better linkages between the Highland Resort and Grampian Road, potentially involving an extension of the town centre westwards. Ideally this would take the form of a predominantly pedestrian environment, giving access to shops, offices, residences, hotels and civic open space.
- The course of the Aviemore Burn is a key landscape feature in the town centre and needs to be celebrated as such. The burn corridor should be used to form one of the key east-west routes ultimately linking with the An Camas Mor pedestrian access route. In order to recognise the burn in the centre of the town, and to allow its re-naturalisation, it is necessary to expose and celebrate the bridge. Ideally this would enable views along the burn corridor in both directions and also allow continuous pedestrian access under Grampian Road.
- Better visual links between the town centre and the wider landscape need to be established. This could be achieved by the introduction of higher mixed use buildings on the west side of Grampian Road and the protection/ enhancement of existing view gaps.

12 PLANNING AND DESIGN PRINCIPLES

- 12.1 The strategic objectives of the design framework will be delivered through the following overarching planning and design principles:
1. To Create a High Aspiration for Architectural and Design Quality
 2. To Promote Energy Efficiency and Sustainability
 3. To Promote Physical and Visual Relationships with the Wider Landscape Setting
 4. To Develop a Legible 'Urban' Town Centre and a Clear Hierarchy of Urbanity
 5. To Improve the Woodland Setting and Woodland Structure of Aviemore
 6. To Improve Pedestrian Connectivity, and Achieve a More Pedestrian and Cycling Friendly Environment

12.2 The above objectives are described and illustrated in the following pages.

Principle 1: To Create a High Aspiration for Architectural and Design Quality

12.3 The first principle seeks to improve the architectural standards in Aviemore. There needs to be a high aspiration for design quality in terms of urban design, architectural design and landscape design. The urban form of the town should aim to:

- reinforce Aviemore as a quality destination and an important service centre within the Cairngorms National Park;
- reflect Aviemore's setting in one of Europe's most important landscape contexts; and
- reflect Aviemore's identity as one of the UK's most popular tourist destinations for outdoor pursuits and recreation.

The architecture and landscape design should therefore:

- create a distinctive sense of place and identity;
- embrace contemporary design whilst respecting the legacy of traditional building in the area;
- aim to secure iconic contemporary buildings of national and international significance that create attractions in their own right and become 'landmarks' for the town;
- provide best practice demonstrations of sustainable design, making these a key part of Aviemore's future identity;
- a high quality pedestrian and cycling orientated public realm; and
- provide landscape and external space design that responds to the wider landscape.

12.4 A new Aviemore vernacular should be developed that reflects both Scottish and Alpine resort design with a contemporary edge created by the use of sustainable technologies and high calibre designers. This vernacular should be more than tokenistic additions to standard buildings and should extend to building design, materials, orientation, landscape and townscape design. These principles should apply

to new developments within the town centre, to redeveloped sites as they come forward, and to the refurbishment of existing buildings.

- 12.5 There are a number of historic buildings that contribute to creating a positive impression of Aviemore including the railway station, the Cairngorm Hotel, and several Victorian villas. These historic buildings should be conserved and any extensions sensitively handled as recognisable contemporary additions which avoid clumsy pastiche. Their settings should also be respected by adjacent new developments.
- 12.6 Developers should be encouraged to use high calibre designers and design practices with proven track record of delivering buildings and places of high quality. The Cairngorms National Park Authority should consider setting architectural benchmarks through the use of architectural competitions for any prominent central buildings such as a new visitor centre, a library, a community centre, an arts centre, or a combination of the above. Achieving a landmark building of significant architectural quality would provide a benchmark for future developments and clearly underline the town’s aspirations for the future. New landmark building (s) would also boost the town’s image and could create an added attraction to visitors, would-be residents and investors.

Contemporary architecture within the town centre should be higher rise and designed to capitalise on views whilst using a range of natural materials respectful of their highland context.



Large scale leisure/commercial buildings could draw influences from the local vernacular, eg whisky bond houses or from local landforms, avoiding ubiquitous warehouse solutions.



Examples of how contemporary residential architecture could be integrated and achieve strong visual relationships with the surrounding countryside through fenestration design, balconies and terraces.

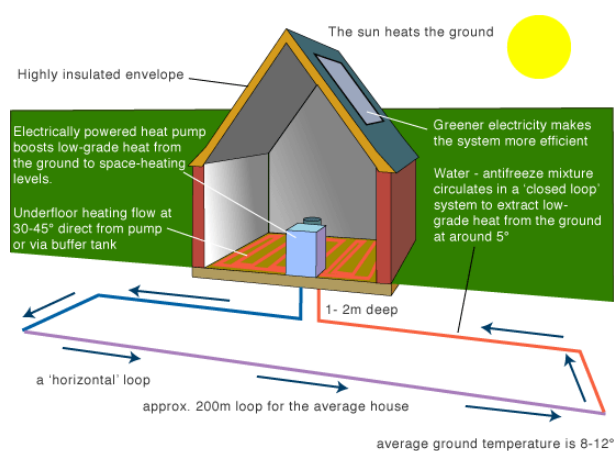


New residential developments in the outer (Northern) areas of Aviemore could achieve greater cohesion and clearer definition of community space without adopting suburban solutions.



Principle 2: To Promote Energy Efficiency and Sustainability

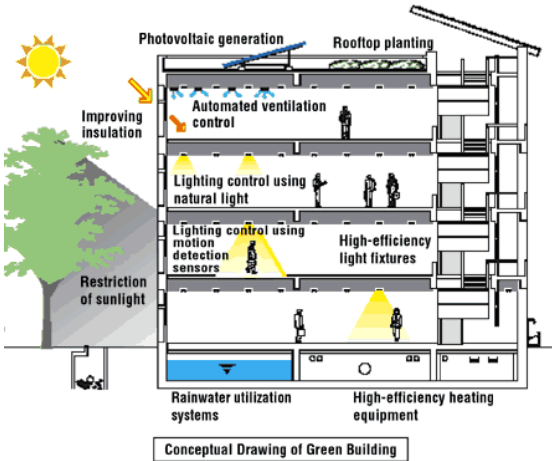
- 12.7 In response to climate change, and global efforts to improve energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions, all new developments shall be energy efficient and sustainable in operation. They shall also be constructed with consideration to sustainable construction best practice and utilise sustainable and/or recycled materials. Ideally the future Aviemore will become renowned for its sustainable design and management.
- 12.8 Existing buildings that are to be converted or renovated should also demonstrate that the energy efficiency of the building structure has been improved and any new materials should utilise sustainable and/or recycled materials.
- 12.9 The Cairngorms National Park Sustainable Design Guide should be referenced as a key guide in the design and construction process.
- 12.10 The use of renewable energy sources, either at a domestic micro-generation, or at district community level, should be explored in all new developments. Not only will this help reduce carbon emissions but it will also assist the local economy in the long term through operational cost savings for residents and businesses.
- 12.11 Sustainable landscape design should be evident throughout Aviemore utilising sustainable best practice, and sustainable and / or recycled materials. All new developments should promote walking and cycling and consider how they can improve the wider pedestrian and cycling network. This may include consideration of preserving adequate space for pedestrians and cyclists within the public realm, promotion of green corridors, path networks and public spaces that are managed for wildlife and people.
- 12.12 As outlined in Principle 7 pedestrian and cycling links between the residential areas, and the town centre services, and links to public transport, are to be promoted.
- 12.13 Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SUDS) should be adopted in all development proposals. SUDS should be considered with regard to context and an appropriate solution proposed. Alternatives to the standard red concrete block paving should be explored if this 'fall-back' option is not deemed suitable for the site.



Ground source pumps



Sheep wool insulation



Solar panels



Domestic wind turbines

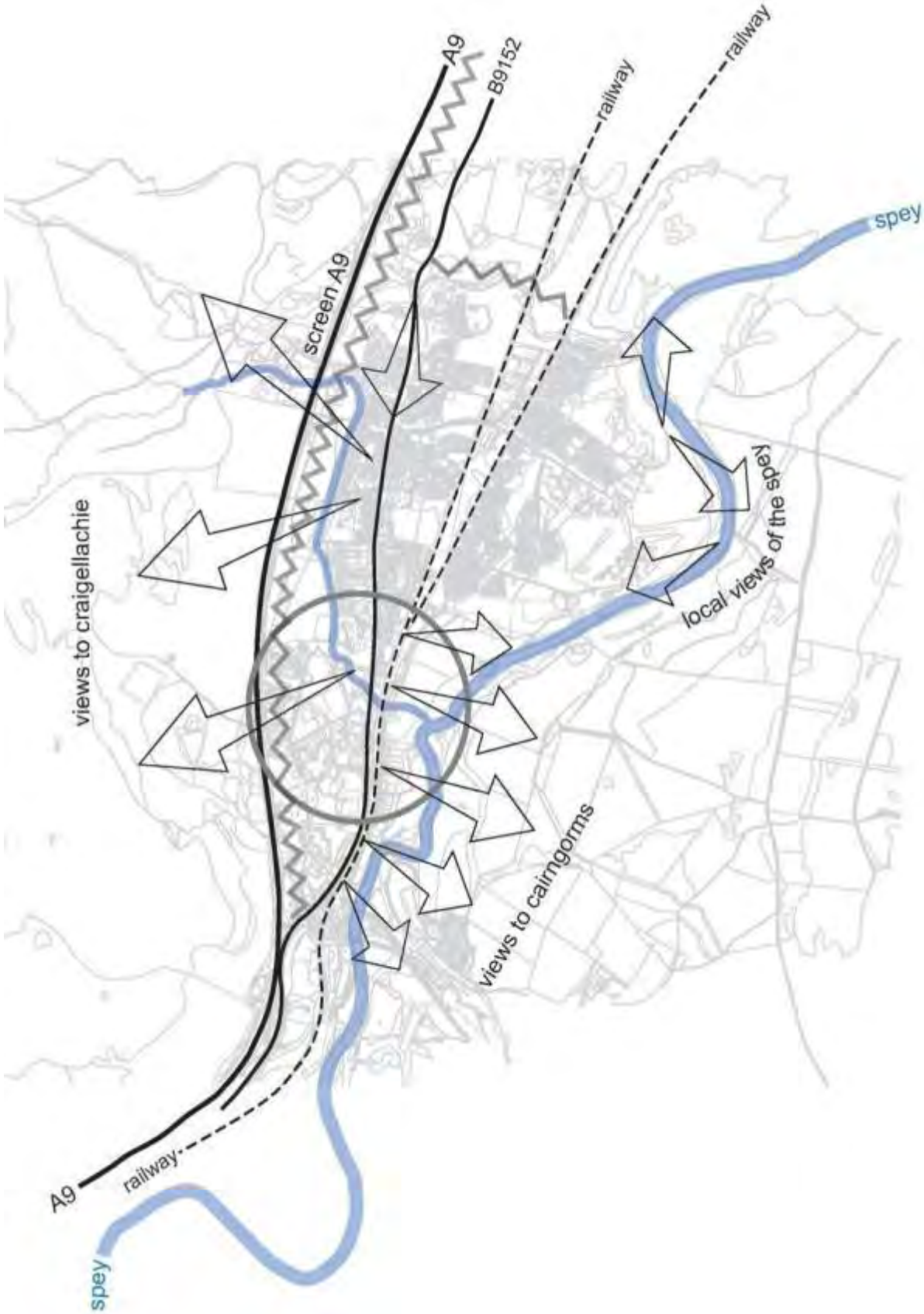


Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems



Principle 3: To Develop Visual Relationships with the Wider Landscape Setting

- 12.14 Principle 4 also acknowledges Aviemore’s location within and association to a nationally significant landscape which provides a distinctive sense of place and is an essential characteristic of the town. The wider landscape should therefore be experienced from within the town. New developments should carefully consider how to accommodate views and vistas to the Cairngorm Mountains, and/or the Craigellachie hills. This could be achieved by a number of measures including the orientation and spatial arrangements of building groupings; careful siting relative to topography; localised use of higher buildings; mixed use developments with imaginative layouts for upper floors; effective fenestration and potentially the use of balconies or terraces.
- 12.15 Variations in scale and segmentation should be used to avoid long horizontal buildings (as currently found on the east side of Grampian Road) blocking views to the countryside. This should provide opportunities for slot views (via pends or lanes) or allow higher buildings to overlook the lower ones. This approach should also allow the creation of accents and architectural landmarks in the town which could help to define spaces, reinforce corners or mark entrances.
- 12.16 Many contemporary mountain resorts have streets with buildings in excess of four storeys, taking advantage of views to the surrounding countryside with mountain backcloths from most viewpoints. Careful massing, choice of materials, use of natural colours and roof design will ensure that the town centre, whilst visible in the wider landscape, is not a prominent and discordant feature.
- 12.17 The visual impact of new developments around the edges of Aviemore should also be carefully considered in the context of the highland landscape setting. This should seek to ensure that views into or over the town from the surrounding countryside, or from its approach roads, are not negatively affected by blank rear elevations, ‘backlands’, car parks and high fencing.



Principle 4: To Develop a Legible Town Centre and a Clear Hierarchy of Urbanity

- 12.18 This principle seeks to reinforce the importance and usability of the town centre for retail, social and cultural activities. Aviemore town centre has a fragmented urban form and mediocre architecture. It contains a range of shops and facilities but these are set within an urban environment which lacks a distinctive character and legibility.
- 12.19 Urban form should be a key consideration in planning decisions and a key objective should be the development of an identifiable and attractive town centre for Aviemore. This requires the reinforcement of urban qualities in the ‘core’ area allowing the transition from the suburban outer areas to a centre which is more densely developed and which has a richness of architecture and public realm. Detached and semi detached housing in the outer areas should give way to more consolidated development blocks which define the street and public spaces, and which provide the town’s main facilities. Generally the scale of buildings will increase from one and two storey residential outlying residential neighbourhoods on the periphery of the town, to three or four storey blocks in the town centre, thereby enabling mixed uses, increasing economic efficiency and maximising views to the surrounding countryside (Principle 3)
- 12.20 There is also an opportunity to reinforce the identity of the town centre through the introduction of an iconic central building or buildings on available or potential development sites. Such a building would ideally provide key facilities and potentially mixed use making it a logical hub of activity. Such a building could extend up to 5 or 6 storeys in height thereby establishing a landmark focus for the town centre. There are historic precedents in scenic highland settings including Birnam, Grantown, Nethy Bridge and Kingussie where notable high buildings with dynamic roofscapes and are recognised as marking the central point in the settlement. These buildings are often town halls, churches, or hotels.
- 12.21 Conversely the outermost developments in Aviemore should seek to achieve integration with the surrounding landscape and should incorporate native planting frameworks. They should also avoid the creation of alien suburban landscapes.

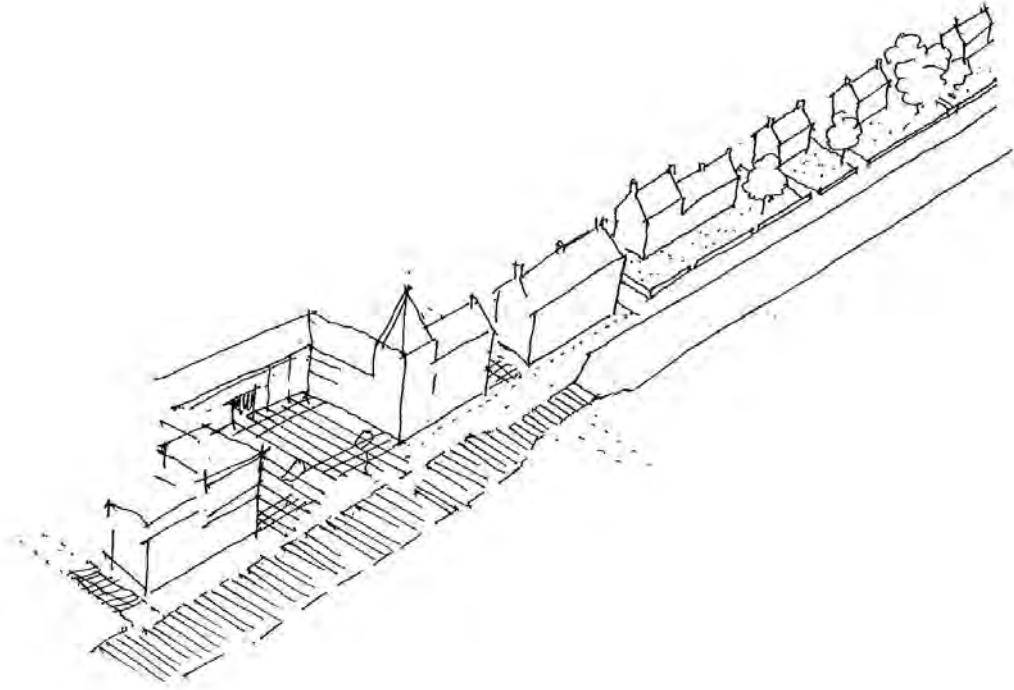


Illustration of possible urban form in Aviemore

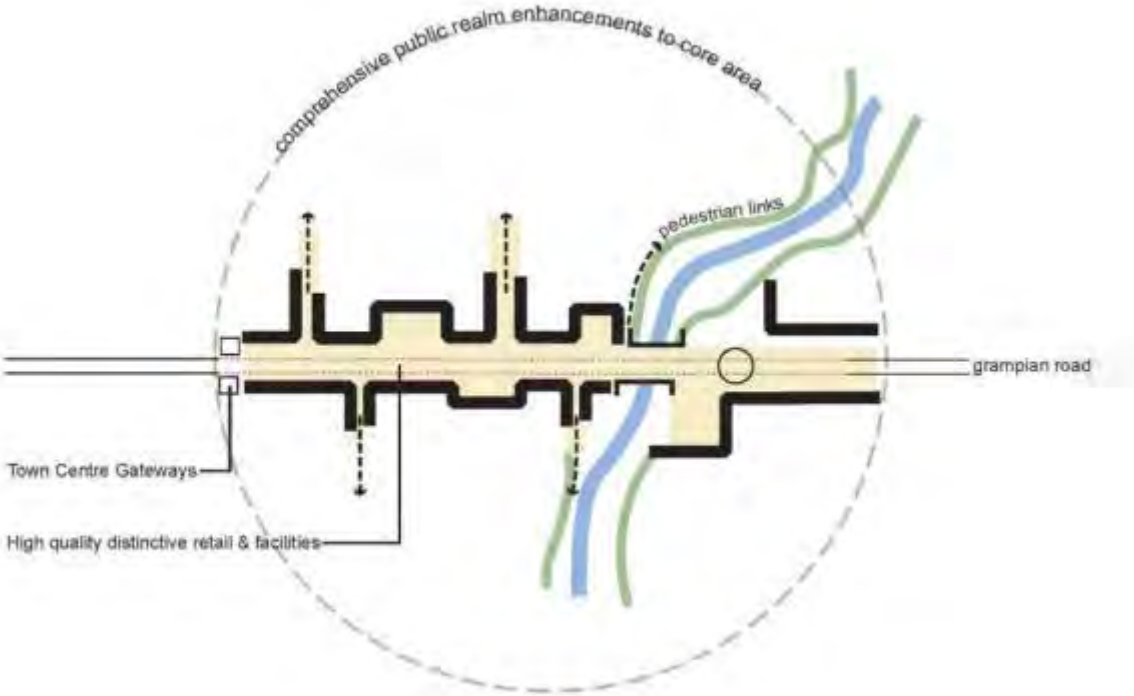


Aviemore's highland context could accommodate higher landmark buildings to create street/civic space definition.



Principle 5: To Create High Quality Public Realm and achieve traffic calming within the Town Centre.

- 12.22 Enhancement of Grampian Road between the railway station and the AHR Distributor Road Grampian Road roundabout would reinforce the identity of the town centre while helping to achieve traffic calming and increasing pedestrian amenity in the 'core' of Aviemore. This type of work has already addressed the railway station forecourt and adjacent areas. It is proposed to extend these recent urban realm improvements northwards, incorporating the footways, carriageway and ideally the forecourt areas in private ownership, where they are of high prominence, eg to the front of the Cairngorms Hotel and certain shops. Pedestrian routes running from the Grampian Road corridor would also be given a high quality public realm treatment in order to complement new developments behind the Grampian Road frontage and to encourage/facilitate pedestrian movement between the Aviemore Highland Resort and the retail/services core of the town. New civic spaces which adjoin Grampian Road would be of equally high quality and complementary in their detailing. Ideally these enhancements would utilise high quality natural stone pavements, eg Caithness slabs on footways and granite setts on the carriageway.
- 12.23 Clear messages should be conveyed to motorists that the core section of Grampian Road has pedestrian priority. This should be achieved by the comprehensive public realm treatment of the road corridor to reduce vehicle speeds (and to deter unnecessary through traffic) and to facilitate pedestrian movements east -west. The traffic calmed core area should be defined by gateways/thresholds located at the northern and southern ends of the core area, ie at the roundabout and at the junction just south of the rail station respectively.
- 12.24 Recent successful public realm improvements such as the drystone walling, timber columned lighting and the use of timber and glass for signage and structures should be extended into the centre of town. These should combine with high quality paving materials and furniture to create a strong identity for the centre. This identity or 'brand' should reflect the role of the town as a national focus for sport, outdoor recreation, education and landscape.



Principle 6: To reinforce Aviemore’s Woodland and Greenspace Structure

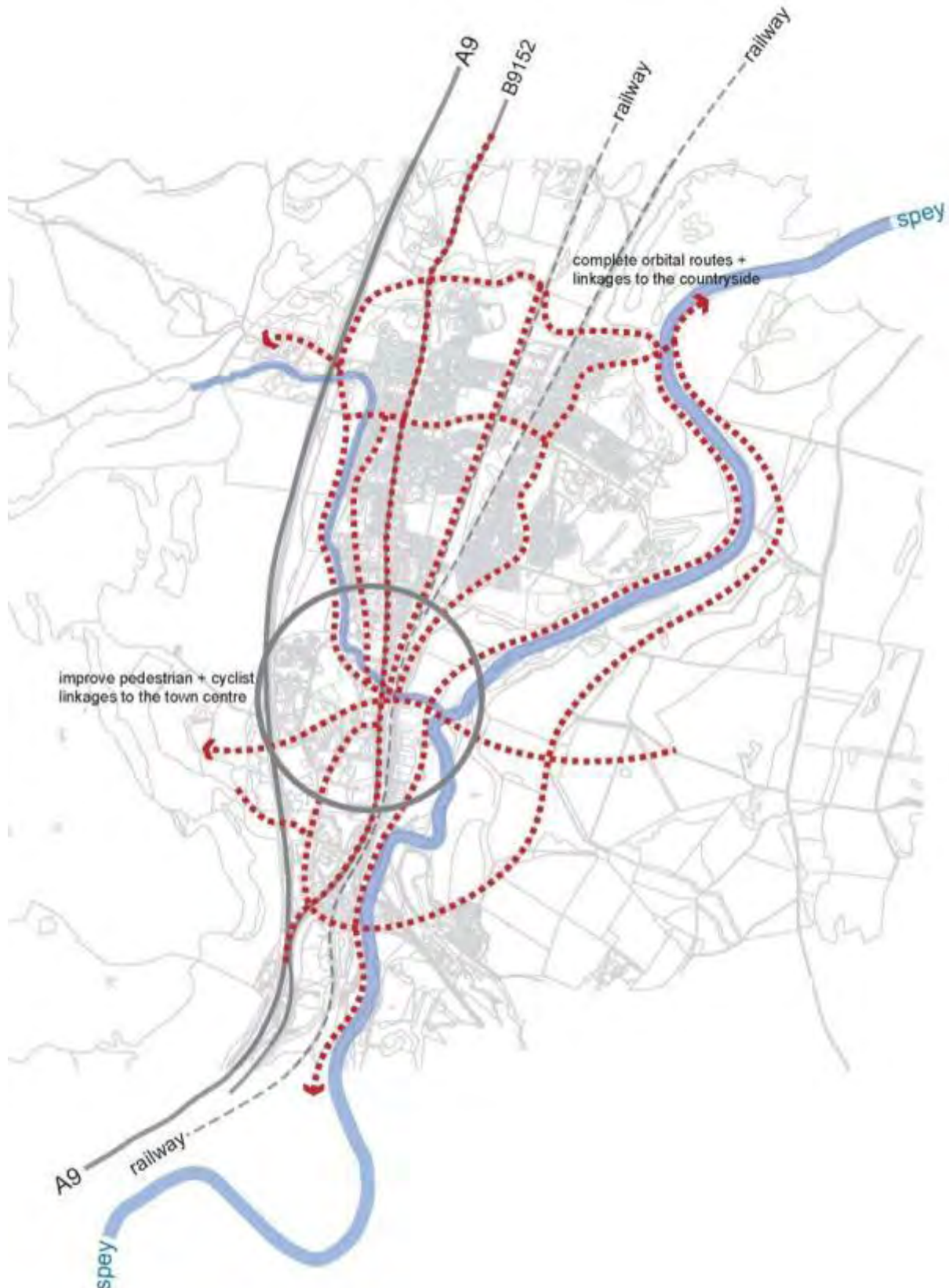
- 12.25 The setting of Aviemore should reflect its location within a nationally significant landscape through the incorporation and improvement of significant native woodland areas in and around the town. The backcloth of Craigellachie’s wooded slopes, the riparian woodlands of the Spey and the nearby Caledonian pine woodlands provide the setting to Aviemore and significant stands of woodland remain within the town’s boundaries. Furthermore many nearby settlements, such as Carr-Bridge, Grantown-on-Spey and Nethy Bridge are set within mature woodlands which is a strong characteristic of the area and of the individual villages.
- 12.26 Advantages for improving the woodland structure of the town include:
- creating a more attractive place to live and work;
 - responding to the town’s natural setting and location;
 - to improve the gateways for the town;
 - reinforce Aviemore’s identity as an outdoor destination and Highland town;
 - provide a transition between urban and rural areas;
 - strengthen the urban edge and set spatial limits for urban expansion;
 - improve biodiversity;
 - respond to and enhance pedestrian and cyclist circulation routes and corridors.
- 12.27 The design and management of external space in residential neighbourhoods must shift to a more sensitive approach that reflects local biodiversity and ecology, which will also shift the aesthetic from ‘generic suburban’ to place-specific ‘Aviemore. Where possible, stands of existing birch and Scots Pine woodland should be retained within greenspaces in housing areas. New birch and pine woodland should also be integrated and ideally connected to the peripheral woodland areas in order to create wildlife corridors. Where not needed for formal recreation, grassland areas should be managed for wild flowers.
- 12.28 Areas of existing birch and pine woodland exist around the town, and these should be protected against future development. This includes the wooded slopes of Craigellachie, Rothiemurchus and the River Spey corridor and areas of woodland around the northern and southern approaches to the town on the A95.
- 12.29 There are further opportunities to increase woodland cover at the northern and southern gateways to the town; along the burn and natural local glacial landforms to the north of the existing town perimeter, and around the junction between the A95 and the B970 to the south; and along the River Spey corridor.
- 12.30 Particular emphasis should be placed on the Aviemore Burn corridor which should be protected and as a strategic public access route, wildlife and recreational resource tying directly into the town centre from the north-west and east.
- 12.31 With the exception of the town centre, native trees, woodland and meadow establishment should be encouraged throughout the town’s green spaces especially in residential areas around the periphery.



Principle 7: To Improve Pedestrian Connectivity, and Achieve a more Pedestrian and Cycling Friendly Environment in Aviemore

- 12.32 This principle seeks to achieve the development of a network of interconnected pedestrian and cyclist routes in and around Aviemore, and to create a high quality pedestrian and cycling priority public realm.
- 12.33 Key pedestrian and cycling routes should provide:
- easy access between key facilities and services;
 - east access between residential areas and the town centre facilities; and
 - between the town and the wider landscape.
- 12.34 The Principle would achieve a number of benefits including:
- reduced car use and car dependency, and associated reduction in car parking requirements (within the town centre);
 - a more attractive town centre public realm;
 - a more socially cohesive place;
 - health benefits through the promotion of walking and cycling;
 - reinforcement of Aviemore’s identity as an ‘Outdoor Pursuits’ destination and promotion of a walking and cycling friendly destination;
 - easier and sustainable access to the wider landscape; and
 - pedestrian and cycling safety benefits.
- 12.35 Pedestrian and cycling circulation should comprise a town centre hub, with links to outlying neighbourhoods, peripheral orbital routes to An Camas Mor and to the wider landscape. Ideally the pedestrian/cyclist links would be segregated from the roads for safety and amenity. However, where segregation is not possible parallel or on road cycle lanes should be considered together with improved road crossings and complementary traffic calming measures. The establishment of a robust landscape framework around the edge of the town could accommodate an outer pedestrian/cyclist circuit which provides a circular route around Aviemore and connects back to the centre.
- 12.36 Pedestrian and cycling routes should be developed through the housing areas using existing greenspaces where available, and considering how green corridors might be extended to create linkages to the town centre, to local facilities or to other access routes. Where the housing developments have cul de sac layouts then pedestrian/cyclist through-routes should be created to encourage and facilitate walking and cycling in lieu of car use.
- 12.37 The pedestrian and cycling experience should be improved in the town centre and priority given to pedestrian and cyclist movements. This may require discouraging (although not eliminating) through traffic on Grampian Road within the town centre.

12.38 The relationship between all buildings and the street or adjacent public spaces should Always be positive, with active street frontages and the use of arcades, canopies, decks porches and front gardens to create a strong indoor-outdoor relationship and convivial streets. This shall apply to the residential as well as the town centre areas.



Principle 8: A rational approach to traffic management and parking provision

- 12.39 Circulation should be structured to reinforce the links between outlying areas and the town centre. Cul de sac layout developments should be avoided as they generate increased travel distances and encourage use of the car. Emphasis should be placed on encouraging and providing for pedestrian/cyclist access as described above, however there may be additional scope to improve the amenity of the town centre by discouraging or restricting vehicular access through the traffic calmed core area. Alternative access through the Highland Resort can bypass the core section of Grampian Road whilst accessing the AHR car parks and other commercial facilities. The development of community facilities and the future supermarket at the north end of the core area will also reduce the distance of travel from the main housing areas in the north, thereby reducing the need for car use to access these facilities.
- 12.40 The longer term creation of an additional road bridge over the Spey would more effectively link An Camas Mor and Aviemore and would help to create a more integrated and less linear settlement form. Such a link could be all-traffic, public transport only or walking and cycling only. It would provide a connection between An Camas Mor and the employment areas at Dalfaber. The proposed direct pedestrian link between An Camas Mor and Aviemore would also help to provide greater focus on the town centre (and on the River Spey – one of Aviemore’s hidden assets).
- 12.41 Residential development should depart from the current patterns of suburban street layouts and should create clusters that focus on streets and pocket parks – the emphasis should be extrovert not introvert, creating natural surveillance and opportunities for social intercourse at street level. Home Zone principles should also apply to street layouts, to encourage street life at residential level. These principles should however be applied informally to avoid the creation of over-engineered, suburban spaces, ie avoiding cul de sacs of concrete block paving.
- 12.42 Significant parking areas (public and private) are currently available in Aviemore and the future consideration of parking needs must therefore investigate how the existing facilities could be best utilised before additional car parks are built. Ideally parking facilities should be located and designed to minimise their impact on the town centre environment. Where additional parking is required for major new facilities then it should be located discreetly to prevent negative impacts on townscape or views. Preferable solutions include edge of centre sites to the rear of developments or potentially underground where topography allows. Parking that is at grade should be designed within an informal landscaped setting that responds to the local landscape through the use of native planting and local materials. There should be a departure from generic ‘business park/conference centre/suburban vernacular’. Car parks should be treated as an opportunity for good landscape design and in all cases their appearance and potential uses when not filled with vehicles should be considered. There should be direct pedestrian access between the town centre and the car parking.

13 DESIGN GUIDANCE

13.1 This chapter outlines the key design guidance for Aviemore. It is subdivided into three main components:

Part A: General Architectural Design Guidance

Part B: General Public Realm Design Guidance

Part C: Development Zones and Development Sites

Part A: General Architectural Design Guidance

13.2 Principle 3 recognises the opportunity to create a contemporary architectural character for Aviemore. Although there are a number of historic buildings that merit conservation, the majority of buildings in Aviemore have been developed over the last 30-40 years. There is no overriding architectural style from which new developments would take design cues from. On this basis, there is a significant opportunity for contemporary high quality architecture that is distinctive in style and perhaps unique in Scotland.

13.3 Whilst Aviemore should embrace high quality contemporary architecture, there are opportunities to obtain design cues in relation to general building scale and form from traditional building characteristics in the region. Modern interpretations of traditional details should be avoided as this often results in unsympathetic pastiche details.

13.4 The form of the majority of new buildings, unless identified as landmark buildings, and especially those out with the town core, are likely to be relatively simple. A simple form with 45 degree pitch roofs would provide an adequate base for modern vernacular buildings. Hipped roofs, false and pastiche dormers, and interlocking concrete roof tiles (especially red/brown) should be avoided.

13.5 The use of concrete blocks as the main visible building component should be avoided and consideration given to render, harling, stone, metal, glazing or timber materials as the main visible construction material. These materials should not be considered as an 'add-on' facade, but should be integrated into the building design from the outset.

13.6 Architectural interest could be provided in the detail of windows, doors/thresholds to achieve a coherent and attractive elevation composition on all sides. Recesses in building facades could be incorporated to provide shelter at doorways and or upper windows.

13.7 Variations in scale should be used to avoid long horizontal buildings (as currently found on the east side of Grampian Road). This should provide opportunities for views over to the surrounding hills and between buildings. It should also allow the creation of accents and architectural landmarks in the town which could help to define spaces, reinforce corners or mark entrances.

Securing High Quality Architectural Advice - Recommendations

13.8 How can the influence of unscrupulous developers and design consultants lacking in genuine architectural expertise be minimised within the planning application process? We think this is an important issue in the consideration of developments in vulnerable settings such as small towns like Aviemore. A summary of the key aims and current duties of planning authorities is perhaps a good place to start:

“The planning procedure is designed to control positive change within our towns and cities but also to protect our local historic buildings and areas of natural beauty making sure that the land is developed to everyone’s long term interest.

The planning authority’s main duties are:

1. Deciding on planning permission applications.
2. Organising and preparing development plans.
3. Dealing with building and developments that haven’t been approved.”

- 13.9 The current planning application process involves Local Authorities providing guidelines or recommendations informed by local plans and structure plans to applicants and their agents. Anyone can make an application. This is disseminated informally at a pre-application meeting or later, as a result of formal planning application. It is characteristically reactive, ie it is a response to a proposal (however initial) placed in front of the authority for their comments or decision. Those initial sketches that have been presented will have been produced by a developer’s consultants and by the time a planning authority has the opportunity to comment on any reasonably-sized proposal, the relationship between developer and consultant will have been already established. That relationship may have a firm, professional footing or it may not. Those consultants may have carried out that work at risk for no fee or be professionally appointed and remunerated.
- 13.10 Whilst planning departments are not experts in design, there are often grey areas of assessment and judgement which involve officers making comments on design decisions. This can be exploited by the more unscrupulous applicant to push a particular agenda and conversely can prompt less-experienced planners to react over-cautiously to applications of more contemporary architectural nature. Their role in all this can be assisted by bodies such as Architecture+ Design Scotland who “actively assist planning authorities particularly through design reviews.”² However, not every application is (or can be) reviewed by A+DS.
- 13.11 If design issues, such as placement, form and silhouette, material choice, scale, opening types, roof pitches, etc may be prescribed by planning departments within their normal remit, we would suggest that under the present process, this influence is often too little and too late to encourage genuine architectural quality. It cannot significantly address designs which are produced by weak design teams. There is also a danger that an emphasis on ‘features’ and appearances can undermine the design process which a good architect is involved in when producing a piece of architecture with genuine quality.
- 13.12 A problem occurs, when the applicant and design consultants have little interest in any design agenda, whether it is the actual architectural quality of the place they are building in or the proposals they are presenting. In these cases, the lack of architectural expertise in the design team cannot be compensated by recommendations and conditions laid down by planning departments. Is it satisfactory therefore to simply accept this position as being out-with the influence of those charged with “controlling positive change” and protecting and enhancing the built environment? This is especially crucial in the area of fragile environments, such as

small towns, historic sites and rural settings. A brief piece of desktop research into good contemporary architecture in the UK will reveal few exemplary examples in rural settlements especially those without robust economies. This is a subject that needs to be addressed within the planning system.

- 13.13 A good architectural team welcomes constructive criticism (and indeed is self critical), but a poor one will not. Design reviews, be it with A+DS or other bodies, may have influence over the designs but cannot have influence over the choice of the actual designers. No amount of recommendations or conditions will turn a bad design into a good one without genuine architectural expertise as this plays a large role in the final outcome. The evidence everywhere points clearly to the conclusion that if a well-designed building is the aim, then it is necessary to have an architect who knows how to design well. This is understood in the architectural profession at least. Both the RIBA and RIAS have advisory sections where clients can be given recommendations for architects with specific expertise or experiences. It would be advantageous if a planning authority could advise a developer in a similar way (or at least point developers to an appropriate source for such advice). This would help to ensure that the design teams are appropriately skilled and experienced.
- 13.14 There is a strong case to be made for applicants discussing proposals with the planning authority before their design consultants have been appointed in order that there may be an opportunity for planners to make recommendations on how to find the best possible consultants for a specific situation. This could be done by referrals to RIBA, RIAS or A+DS, but would allow a certain pause for thought before the first conversations began. If *designs* can be influenced significantly by the planning departments, then we see no reason, given the above, why *designers* cannot be as well. However, this is potentially difficult to implement fairly and effectively. Would such recommendations overstep a planning authority's legal obligations? Does it run the risk of developing monopolies of 'favoured' consultants? Yet, the majority of public sector work is advertised in OJEU and even modest, local projects have PQQ processes where consultants are invited to prove they are eligible for consideration on merit for a particular project. This process is not without its weaknesses; most notably its failure to give young architectural practices of ability but with little experience, the chance to prove themselves.
- 13.15 However, if this is the norm in the world of procurement, could lessons be learned that are relevant in the world of planning processes? Could a pre-qualification questionnaire be a requirement of a developer's consultant, providing evidence to the planning authority before the first line was drawn, that on paper at least, the consultants were qualified for the task in hand. It is recommended that Cairngorm National Park Authority consider how it could positively influence the selection of design consultants by developers. Initially this could involve an offer of early consultation combined with a clear message about the Park Authority's expectations for architectural quality within the National Park and Aviemore specifically.

Part B: General Public Realm Design Guidance

Signage

- 13.16 In addition to statutory traffic signage, Aviemore, and in particular, Grampian Road corridor, has a proliferation of private signage which advertises and provides basic directions to commercial, leisure and tourist facilities. The signs vary considerably in quality, size and prominence. They include a variety of signs including:
- (i) a co-ordinated suite of profiled and enamelled signs including timber signs were introduced during the 1990s and these were of bespoke design and high quality construction. They remain in several locations including the railway station, the town's northern boundary, at several guest houses, and at the Myrtlefield shops. These have a distinctive 'Northern Territories' character but are also individual in their content;
 - (ii) miscellaneous commercial signage introduced after the profiled timber signs, including enamelled aluminium and sheet steel signs and sheet plastic signs, with and without frames, some in pedestal format and some with down or uplighters. Of particular prominence are the blue Aviemore Highland Resort signs;
 - (iii) a suite of bespoke post signs with timber posts and cast metal 'finger' signs bearing the name of the attraction/feature/facility together with an enamelled illustration representing the facility. These finger posts continue the 'Northern Territories' theme but despite their bespoke design, appear rather clumsy and intrusive;
 - (iv) other types of finger post signs are present in a number of locations and in some cases there are several signs at one site creating a confused and cluttered picture;
 - (v) interpretative signs combining cast metal with graphic materials, and more conventional interpretative/orientation signboards;
 - (vi) temporary advertisement signs in printed fabric nailed to fences, and as 'sandwich boards' on the footways.
- 13.17 While several signs are well conceived and located, there is inconsistency in quality, localised clutter and visual intrusion. The latter convey the impression of inadequate control over the design and location of signs, together with a need for guidance in these subjects.
- 13.18 Some key design principles are set out below.



Large sign blocks view of landmark building



Carefully conceived suite of timber signage from the 1990's latterly replaced by unco-ordinated, ad-hoc signs



Introduction of new signs competing with originals and creating clutter



Temporary signs creating a negative impression

Signage – Design Principles

- 13.19 Key principles for the design and placement of signs in Aviemore are as follows:
- (i) all types of sign should be developed to a high standard and belong to a recognisable ‘family’ of Aviemore signs. This should not prevent the expression of individual identities for private businesses, but should ensure that this is done within set parameters, eg size, shape, framework/background design, support design. Public signs for information and direction should be coordinated and to a design which is contemporary yet sympathetic to the local environment. There should also be a relationship between signage and other elements of street furniture.
 - (ii) the visual impact of commercial signs within public realm must be carefully considered to avoid blocking or detracting from established views towards the Cairngorm Mountains, towards Craigellachie and to notable buildings. This implies the placement of signs where permanent ‘backclothing’ is locally present, eg walls, fences and established vegetation;
 - (iii) the duplication of signs and the resultant clutter should be avoided. Signage information should also be rationalised to avoid confusing the audience;
 - (iv) there should be a presumption against temporary advertisement signs remotely located from the business premises, ie makeshift signboards and fabric signs pinned to fences/trees, etc. These are detrimental to the character of Aviemore and detract from the town’s public realm.

Street Lighting

- 13.20 Street lighting within Aviemore varies locally in type according to the date of installation and the scale/function of the streets. The relatively recent expansion of Aviemore’s residential areas has seen lighting installed as part of the infrastructure for individual housing developments. Lighting within the oldest parts of the town has been renewed during recent public realm works along the Grampian Road corridor. It is evident that there has been no or little attempt to co-ordinate new street lighting with older fittings, eg colour of columns. The result is that there is little consistency to street lighting within Aviemore overall, although some areas have locally distinctive treatments, eg multi-coloured columns.
- 13.21 The lack of consistency is most noticeable along the Grampian Road corridor where distinctive new timber column sheet lights have recently been introduced. These create a strong statement and reinforce Aviemore’s Highland identity. However, this innovative development is localised at the southern approach and at the Railway Station, leaving other parts of Grampian Road with older steel columned lighting painted blue and grey.
- 13.22 The exuberant use of timber columned lighting at the Railway Station has unfortunately been ‘over-egged’ and there are now too many vertical structures (lighting and signs) which compete with the distinguished station architecture.



New timber column lighting introduced at the station and on the south approaches of Aviemore



A mixture of municipal street lighting exists along Grampian Road



The introduction of too many lights and signs has created clutter adjacent to the railway

Introducing a suite of timber lighting columns would provide lighting for a variety of situations whilst adding continuity throughout the town



Street Lighting – General Design Principles

- 13.23 General design principles for street lighting within Aviemore are as follows:
- (i) create unity and strengthen the character of the important Grampian Road corridor by extending the distinctive timber columned street lights along the length, from southern to northern gateways. The timber column solution is a statement of sustainability and also evokes Aviemore’s relationship with the surrounding wooded landscapes (the timber lighting columns use Scots Pine heartwood and Scots Pine cover is characteristic of Aviemore). North of the town centre timber-columned lighting of a simpler form and with potentially shorter columns would be more appropriate to recognise the decreasing urbanity towards the northern part of the town;
 - (ii) the use of reflective lantern types (in the manner used at the Railway Station) should be confined to the town centre section of Aviemore, to reinforce its urbanity and create landmark effects at key public spaces;
 - (iii) future street lighting installations should ideally incorporate energy efficient technology, eg LEDs, self-dimming and should be designed to minimise light spillage/pollution of night skies;
 - (iv) lighting columns along Grampian Road should be adaptable for the temporary addition of banners, potentially for seasonal events;
 - (v) street lighting within housing areas should ultimately be made more consistent in character and quality. Consideration should be given to extending the timber-columned solution to the housing areas, but using smaller and simpler design solutions.

Barriers and Separating Elements

- 13.24 Barriers and separating elements in the form of walls, fences and hedges are commonplace features within Aviemore’s public realm, especially within the housing areas and along Grampian Road.
- 13.25 Historically, masonry walls with gate pillars defined the front garden boundaries of Victorian villas. Latterly, stone rubble walls have been introduced along the Grampian Road corridor to establish some spatial definition and visual continuity. This has been largely successful although differences in the stone materials and forms of construction have introduced some inconsistency, contrary to the original intentions.
- 13.26 Within the housing areas, timber fencing is extensive, and where high close-boarded fences are used, they are dominant features of the landscape. Generally, fence types relate to the design layout and age of the individual housing areas. In the older schemes many fences have been repaired, replaced or re-stained often introducing fencing types and colours different from the original or neighbouring fences. In some instances, the replacements are a deliberate attempt to be distinctive or to upgrade the original detail; in others there appears to have been little consideration of design or consistency of quality.
- 13.27 Hedges are less prevalent as external boundaries in Aviemore, presumably due to their space, establishment and maintenance requirements. This denies opportunities for nature conservation and potentially for the creation of more informal housing landscapes.

Barriers and Separating Elements – Design Principles

- 13.28 General design principles for barriers and separating elements in Aviemore are as follows:
- (i) priority should be placed on the maintenance and design of boundary elements along the Grampian Road corridor. This is the spine of Aviemore and essential in shaping the image of the town:
 - Victorian masonry garden walls and gate pillars should be preserved and restored where damage or removal has occurred;
 - fencing of consistent design detailing and colour should ideally be introduced along the Grampian Road corridor. This has the potential to make a design statement and to create more consistent quality within the public realm of Grampian Road;
 - (ii) replacement fencing within housing areas should be of the same height and orientation as the original/neighbouring fencing;
 - (iii) consistent stain colours should be used for fencing within the same housing developments. A restricted palette of stain colours should be selected for use across Aviemore and promoted within the town;
 - (iv) the use of native species hedging should be encouraged, particularly thorns capable of providing fruits and nesting habitats. There should be a presumption against False Cypress hedges.

There remain opportunities to reinstate masonry wall boundaries to Grampian Road



Lack of co-ordination in fencing design or stain colours



New granite walls have helped to reinforce the character of the Grampian Road corridor



Well-intentioned stone wall boundaries fail to match the granite wall introduced elsewhere



Perimeter fence maintenance and replacement affects the character and quality of the public realm



Furniture and Recreation Equipment

- 13.29 There is relatively little furniture within Aviemore’s public realm, reflecting its limited civic and community open spaces. There are, however, opportunities for improvement in a number of respects.



Examples of suites of furniture which could be implemented throughout the town

Furniture and Recreation Equipment – Design Principles

- 13.30 General design principles for furniture and recreation equipment within Aviemore are as follows:
- (i) street furniture and lighting design/selection should also seek to create a consistent image for Aviemore which contributes positively to the town’s identity. These components should be suited to their local environment within the town but should also incorporate co-ordinating features. Selection of furniture and lighting should respond to the hierarchy of the streets and spaces, ie most formal in the town centre/Grampian Road corridor becoming increasingly informal towards the edges of the town and in greenspace locations. The style of the street lighting recently introduced in the town centre would ideally be used as a template for future lighting, furniture and signage design, ie contemporary but sympathetic to the Highland setting.
 - (ii) there are opportunities for informal seating at viewpoints and along pedestrian access routes;
 - (iii) additional facilities for cyclists, eg cycle racks/cycle lockers – these could promote walking and social interaction and would also help to promote cycle usage within the town and cater for visiting cyclists. The latter would reinforce Aviemore’s image as a centre for outdoor pursuits;
 - (iv) furniture and recreation equipment could be designed and manufactured by local craftsmen thereby promoting local skills and materials, and creating distinctive solutions for Aviemore;
 - (v) designs for furniture, signage and lighting should be considered in parallel to ensure their compatibility and appropriate level of design consistency, capable or reinforcing the character of Aviemore.

Soft Landscape

- 13.31 A strong characteristic of Aviemore is the presence of native birch and Scots pine woodland which extends through the town and provides a scenic backcloth on the slopes of Craigellachie. Stands of established woodland have been retained and have helped to integrate new developments; in addition, native planting has been introduced as belts through the housing areas which help to link these areas with the surrounding countryside. In time, these will also provide useful wildlife corridors and effective shelter/screen belts.
- 13.32 Conversely, recent housing developments have cleared areas of former woodland to prepare open sites for space-efficient development layouts. This approach has denied the opportunity for integrating buildings within the landscape.
- 13.33 Within the older parts of Aviemore, including the Victorian villas of Grampian Road, former gardens have been removed to provide car parking areas for guest houses. Whilst understandable, these developments have resulted in a loss of amenity and of soft landscape features within the Grampian Road corridor.



Corridors of greenspace hold potential for the integration of nature planting with Aviemore



There is scope to introduce wildflower regimes into some of the public greenspaces



There is scope for localised tree planting within housing areas, in gardens and public greenspaces

Soft Landscape – General Design Principles

- 13.34 General design principles for soft landscape within Aviemore are as follows:
- (i) new developments should seek to retain established native trees and woodland as a positive element of the design – providing added value and helping to integrate buildings/infrastructure in the landscape;
 - (ii) new planting within Aviemore’s open spaces and green corridors should utilise native species representative of the local area and habitat types. Woodland dominated by birch and Scots pine should be extended through the town providing connections with the surrounding countryside;
 - (iii) opportunities to introduce native trees into private gardens should also be explored with emphasis on housing areas previously subject to woodland clearance;
 - (iv) historic specimen trees and tree lines within the older parts of Aviemore should be protected, eg lime avenues, and reinstated where losses have occurred;
 - (v) opportunities to introduce wildflower regimes in public greenspaces should be pursued where these do not impact on recreational activities, eg along verges and around playing fields;
 - (vi) exotic horticultural plantings should generally be contained within private garden areas and within civic/formal areas of the public realm.

Part C: Design Guidance Areas and Development Sites

13.35 Several potential development sites have been identified within Aviemore. For easy organisation and cross referencing these development sites have been grouped together into design guidance areas. These areas are as follows:

Area A: Southern Gateway

Area B: Town Centre

Area C: Northern Aviemore

Area D: Highland Resort

Area E: Riverside Park

13.36 The main opportunities for new developments and architectural and environmental enhancements are summarised within the table below and illustrated on Figure 9. These are then discussed in greater detail.

Table 7.1

A.	Southern Gateway
A1	Architectural facelift/minor remodelling of Italian restaurant at roundabout
A2	Future modifications to claddings for new development above Italian restaurant, eg timber cladding over red 'granite'
A3	Former petrol station development opportunity for feature gateway building: 'gate lodge' to Aviemore
A4	Car park site development opportunity adjacent to alpine sports shop and café
A5	Facelift to cafés adjacent to alpine sports shop
A6	Extend timber column lighting from Railway Station to Entrance roundabout
A7	Preserve landscape dominance of Entrance Zone: additional native planting to corridor; screening of new building above roundabout; careful siting of parking areas to avoid linear car park
A8	Signage rationalisation/quality standards
B	Town Centre
B1	Cairngorm Hotel – comprehensive public realm improvements to forecourt, perimeter treatments, signage (AHR and other), parking
B2	Station forecourt (recent upgrades) but scope of reducing lighting clutter
B3	Existing Tesco's store and car park site – major development opportunity/public realm opportunity
B4	Main retail linear block – architectural modification opportunities and use change
B5	The Garden Site
B6	Burn corridor and bridge open space opportunity – potentially involving removal of toilet block; removal/relocation of fun fair

B7	Architectural enhancements/modification to large building adjacent to roundabout
B8	Comprehensive streetscape/public realm enhancements between Winking Owl and railway station
B9	New supermarket site adjacent to roundabout – major development with potential landmark impact
B10	Facelift/refurbishment to mixed use shops and flats north of roundabout
C	Northern Aviemore
C1	Reinforce native planting throughout the zone to create a unifying structure for the many housing schemes
C2	Examine opportunities for small-scale local community facilities within the northern housing areas
C3	Improve and extend public access links to the town centre and around Aviemore
C4	Improve the environmental quality of the Grampian Road Corridor
C5	Victorian villas – protection of distinctive features (and guidance) – potential assistance in undoing unsympathetic alterations/improving the development
D	Aviemore Highland Resort
D1	Protect and develop the Aviemore Burn corridor as a key part of the town’s green framework and part of the Orbital Route
D2	Restore the Laurel Bank access route and develop links from town centre through AHR
D3	Integrate /enclose parking; apply sustainable drainage solutions and ‘soft’ frameworks
D4	Protect and retain native woodlands, introduce native planting to landscape framework
D5	Protect woodland along A9 corridor; screen AHR developments from the A9
D6	Assess and optimise visual relationships between AHR and town centre/countryside
E	Riverside Park
E1	Develop the Riverside Park as informal ‘country’ type park for Aviemore and An Camas Mor
E2	Develop public access network and create linkages with Core paths; no lighting
E3	Explore option for footbridge in the north to link with Orbital Route
E4	Positive management of riverside woodlands and meadows
E5	Promote the Riverside Park as part of tourist offer



Figure 9

Area A: Southern Gateway

- 13.37 The southern gateway area represents the first impressions of Aviemore for the majority of visitors arriving via the A9(T) from the south. The threshold to this zone is clearly defined by the new roundabout and associated environmental enhancements at the junction of the B9152 and B970.
- 13.38 The area is characterised by the strong presence of birch and pine woodland on both sides of the road and the integration of most buildings within a soft landscape setting. There is consequently no urbanity to this zone although the collection of roadside buildings to the south of the railway station provides the transition to the town centre zone.

Issues

- 13.39 The dominance of the landscape in this zone is an important characteristic which presents Aviemore as a town within a scenic upland setting, in which peripheral woodlands provide the backcloth and integration with the adjacent landscapes of Craigellachie and the River Spey. The dark timber clad lodges of the Aviemore Highland Resort, whilst relatively simple in form, are reasonably well integrated into this landscape; conversely, the residential flats and adjacent cafés fail to define a distinctive entrance for Aviemore or to integrate with the landscape.
- 13.40 With the exception of the Alpine Sports shop and café building, there is no notable or architecture of a quality befitting this location. The recent development of apartments nearby is obtrusive in its massing, detailing and failure to integrate with the landscape as discussed further below.
- 13.41 The Southern Gateway Corridor also has some high profile development sites at the former petrol station and gap site adjacent to the Alpine Sports shop. These sites represent important opportunities to improve the first impressions of Aviemore, but this will necessitate high quality architectural solutions as discussed below.
- 13.42 The Southern Gateway Corridor has been subject to recent environmental improvements at the roundabout and along the adjoining roads, but these improvements have not extended towards Aviemore's centre. This creates inconsistency and is particularly evident in the street lighting, road edge landscape and signage.

Development sites

A2 Vacant Site, west of B9152

- 13.43 This vacant site is currently a flat hardstanding with a backcloth of rising ground covered with pine and birch woodland. It is consequently not as exposed as site A1 and has greater potential for integration with the surrounding landscape.



A2 Vacant Site, west of B9152 images



Opportunities for Enhancement of Existing Buildings

A3: Italian Restaurant

13.44 This building is sited immediately adjacent to the junction roundabout and is, therefore, something of a gateway feature for Aviemore. It is, however, a building that has undergone a number of extensions and embellishments. Some relatively simple modifications could improve its appearance, including:

- the introduction of dark timber cladding over the Fyfe stone wall areas would create a more unified appearance;

A4: Lodge Building

13.45 This building is relatively new and is unfortunately poorly integrated with the landscape due to its large footprint on a single level, heavy massing and awkward detailing. The potentially well-intentioned use of stone cladding has introduced red rubble walling of alien appearance. These facings are particularly obtrusive and the building would benefit from their overcladding, again using dark timber boarding. This cosmetic treatment would clearly not alter the fundamental design but would help to integrate the lodge with the older timber buildings in this area. Additional Scots Pine planting on the embankment below the lodge would also help to integrate this building whilst improving the setting of the Italian Restaurant.

A5: 'Royal Tandoori' Indian Restaurant and 'Happy Haggis' Café

13.46 These businesses are accommodated within two small single storey buildings of different styles. The Indian Restaurant building has cream rendered walls and a hipped roof with a central dormer. The front façade is fully glazed but this appears to be a later alteration. The 'Happy Haggis' building has orange-painted walls and a pitched roof covered in heavy brown tiles. It has an intrusive green awning across its front elevation. Their appearance is that of ad hoc developments seeking to attract business in this out-of-centre location through the use of gaudy colours and signs.

While these buildings are intrinsically poor architecture, they could be improved by some simple measures such as:

- removal the Happy Haggis awning and substitution with a projecting sign below or in place of the existing 'fish' sign;
- change the Happy Haggis colour scheme to the pastel colours characteristic of Aviemore or dark stained to coordinate with the local timber buildings;
- remove the illuminated box sign from the front of the Royal Tandoori and integrate signage within the restaurant fascia/glazed façade;
- redesign and replace the makeshift glazed façade.

A6: Street Lighting

- 13.47 As discussed under Public Realm General Guidance, there is a need for more consistency in street lighting within Aviemore, and this is especially important for the Grampian Road Corridor. For the Southern Gateway it is recommended that the timber-column street lighting be extended from the roundabout to the Railway Station.

A7: Corridor Planting

- 13.48 The dominance of Scots pine and birch woodland is an important characteristic of the Southern Gateway and should be protected through woodland management. New landscaping associated with developments should utilise native species and avoid introducing exotic ornamental planting along the road corridor. The soft landscape dominance should also be protected through careful location and screening of parking areas. This should seek to avoid creating the impression of a linear car park. Consideration should be given to parking provision behind buildings or integrated within landforms and planting.

A8: Signage

- 13.49 The Southern Gateway is important in shaping the first impressions of Aviemore. Signage should, therefore, be carefully sited and information provision rationalised to avoid clutter and confusion. Quality thresholds should be set for all private signs relating to the cafés and shops.

Area B: Town Centre

- 13.50 Area B is the town centre of Aviemore. It contains the majority of services including shops, cafes, restaurants, the railway station and hotels. There is very little residential property in this area.
- 13.51 The town centre is defined by the junction between Grampian Road and Highland Resort access road opposite the railway station in the south, and the roundabout on Grampian Road to the north.

Issues

- 13.52 The town 'centre' is linear in nature and lacks a strong identity despite the presence of the Station and Cairngorm Hotel which are both notable buildings. Most buildings lack distinction and fail to create interesting townscape due to their mediocre design, scale, form and mix of uses. These failings result in a town centre that is fragmented, lacking in landmarks and has poor visual and physical linkages with the surrounding countryside. The lack of strong built forms on the west side of Grampian Road is especially evident and disappointing in that it fails to take advantage of the spectacular views to the Cairngorm Mountains.
- 13.53 The town centre has two particularly prominent development sites at the existing Tesco's supermarket and to the north west of the Myrtlefield roundabout. Development on these sites will impact significantly on the image and identity of Aviemore, and it is therefore imperative that architecture of the highest quality is achieved at these locations. There are a number of further opportunities to improve the structure of the town centre and the appearance/ use of individual buildings through refurbishment, facelifts and architectural remodelling of the existing building stock.
- 13.54 The public realm of the town centre is inconsistent in quality and many areas have limited amenity use due to vehicular traffic access, loading and parking demands. Large areas on, or highly visible from, Grampian Road are designated to parking which detracts from the character of the town centre.
- 13.55 The town centre has been subject to recent public realm improvements in the vicinity of the railway station and along Grampian Road. These improvements could be extended northwards to provide a consistent public realm treatment throughout the town centre. There is significant space that is currently occupied by inappropriate planters and/or car parking. The removal or consolidation of some of these features could release useful civic spaces in the heart of the town.



BI – Cairngorm Hotel

- 13.56 This building is one of the most distinctive in Aviemore, notable for its fine Victorian detailing. Its close association to the railway station makes it representative of a 'hotel de ville,' and it is an important landmark building for the town. The building is further enhanced by its framework of mature lime trees but a number of recent developments have been detrimental to the hotel's setting. These include the introduction of small timber buildings in the forecourt area, the use of the forecourt for parking and the clutter of signs near the entrance.
- 13.57 The Cairngorm Hotel should be protected from unsympathetic extensions or contemporary facelifts.
- 13.58 The building forecourt and street frontage is dominated by car parking and unsympathetic boundary treatments. The image of the hotel and of the Grampian Road corridor would benefit significantly from the relocation of the car parking to the rear of the building and the recreation of a landscaped frontage to the street, ie allowing vehicular access but not parking in front of the hotel. This may include sensitive formal landscape planting and new boundary treatments. Removal of the intrusive Aviemore Highland Resort sign would improve views to this building from the Grampian Road northbound traffic. Hotel signage could also be improved.



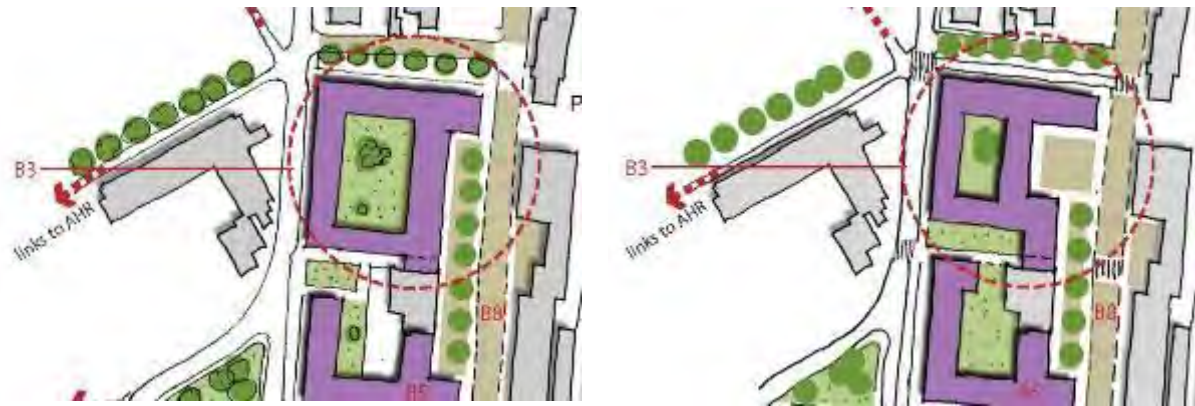
Landscaped street frontage to the Cairngorm Hotel

B2 – Aviemore Station

- 13.59 This building is one of the most distinctive buildings in Aviemore and has a positive relationship with the Cairngorm Hotel which is located on the opposite side of Grampian Road. The station forecourt has recently been upgraded with significant public realm improvements. Unfortunately too many lighting columns and vertical elements have been introduced in this area which are not sympathetic to the building's characteristics and have created visual clutter. Whilst this report supports the use of timber-columned street lighting in Aviemore as discussed earlier, the setting of historic buildings requires a more sensitive approach to avoid 'over-egging' the pudding.

B3 – Existing Tesco's Supermarket Site

- 13.60 By the mediocre standards of many supermarket developments the existing Tesco's supermarket building in Aviemore is successful in a number of modest ways: it continues the building line of the street, it defines the corner, it has a street front access for customers, an active front elevation and a car park at the side rather than the front. However, the architecture is limited in its ambition and resolution. The building attempts to mimic the adjacent historic stone terrace. It achieves this in scale and form although introduces a number of pastiche architectural details and features. The choice of materials is also not sympathetic to the historic or a contemporary style. The supermarket car park, although convenient for the town centre, is highly visible and detracts from the amenity of this area. The planting in the front of the building is inappropriate for the town centre. This area would be better used as part of usable civic space.
- 13.61 Redevelopment of the existing supermarket site should be recognised as a unique opportunity to enhance the character of the town centre and to underline the town's role in catering for visitors and local people. The entire site (supermarket and car parking) should be redeveloped to provide a positive contribution to the town centre. The site could accommodate a number of uses such as: a hotel; public use (library, visitor centre, community centre); retail; commercial; and residential. This opportunity deserves an assured architectural treatment, involving the careful selection of designers potentially by design competition or similar quality based selection process. A well-designed building or buildings and civic space on this site could create a new landmark for the town transforming its image and setting the benchmark for future developments.



Development of the west side of Grampian Road provides options for the creation of dynamic new civic spaces in conjunction with contemporary architecture



Model of existing town centre/Grampian Road



Model illustrating how significant development on the west side of Grampian Road (2-4 storeys) could consolidate the town centre and define a linear and versatile civic space. Higher buildings could overlook the low level shopping centre giving views to the Cairngorm mountains.

- 13.62 Access between Grampian Road and AHR immediately to the north of the site should be preserved and enhanced. The main facade of the development should face onto Grampian Road and be located at the rear of pavement to increase the density of the built form within the town centre. There should be an active frontage on the ground floor incorporating key accesses, shops, restaurants etc. Architecture should be contemporary in style but sympathetic to Aviemore's Highland setting.
- 13.63 There is an opportunity for a corner feature in the north east corner of the site to provide a 'gateway' feature to the town centre and also to enclose the street. On the west side of Grampian Road this development should be higher than the adjacent buildings and those on the opposite side of the road in order to capitalise on the views of the surrounding mountains. Buildings stepping up from 2 to 5 storeys may be acceptable, subject to resolution of visual relationships, access, micro climate, and parking containment.
- 13.64 Car parking for this development should be discreetly provided to the rear of the building visually contained within a courtyard or possibly basement level. This might be accessed via a pend or vennel from Grampian Road to allow continuity of the building line.

B4 – Shopping Centre

- 13.65 The main shopping centre contains a number of interesting and successful businesses. It is however a long horizontal building which appears to mimic the massing of the adjacent railway station but which lacks architectural quality. It has 2 storeys with the upper floor accommodated in a mansard roof. The latter overhangs the footway providing shelter for shoppers. This roof detail and the 'arcade' it creates reinforce the horizontality of the building. The lack of variation in the massing of the building and in the roof line, create monotony in the street despite the quality of the shops. There are windows in the mansard roof but these fail to capitalise on the views available or to add life to the building, particularly along the rear elevation where views to the Cairngorms could have been a major feature.

- 13.66 There is scope for architectural remodelling of the shopping centre although given the relative success of the businesses it is likely that these could not be justified at the present time, but should be considered in any future refurbishment scheme. Future redevelopment of the building should examine how its horizontality could be modified, and how the building's upper floor(s) could relate more positively to the street and to the surrounding countryside. This might be achieved by the localised removal of the mansard, addition of another storey and introduction of balconies/viewing terraces. The latter should however respect westwards views from developments on the opposite side of Grampian Road. This would increase townscape interest and the sense of enclosure along Grampian Road. Upper storeys could be made more 'active' through some use changes e.g. introducing residential accommodation or commercial uses.
- 13.67 In the short term there are some opportunities to improve shop signage using the mansard and arcade structures for mounting.
- 13.68 There is also a need to improve the public realm along the length of these shops. This should apply the same high quality treatment as recently undertaken at the railway station. It should ideally incorporate the whole width of Grampian Road and introduce more appropriate crossing facilities for pedestrians, reduced parking and better furniture, lighting and signage. For this core area of the town centre pavement of the carriageway with granite setts or equivalent should be considered as a means of reinforcing the pedestrian dominance of this area and of defining the 'CENTRE'.

B5 – The Garden Site

- 13.69 The existing garden site is a town asset and provides a greenspace within the town centre. However in the context of other civic and greenspace development opportunities within Aviemore, this garden should be considered as a potential future high quality development site which could contribute positively to the urban form of the town centre.
- 13.70 In the event that other civic spaces can be created in the town centre area, the future development of the garden site should be recognised as a unique opportunity to address the fragmentation of the town centre, reinforce its urban qualities and provide additional mixed use accommodation needed to underpin the town's role in catering for visitors and local people. The site could accommodate a number of uses such as: a hotel; public use (library, visitor centre, community centre); retail; commercial; and residential.
- 13.71 A building could be constructed in line with the existing stone terrace but with a projection towards Grampian Road at its south end. This would provide localised enclosure and potential for a 'gateway' building at the southern end of the core area. Importantly this spatial arrangement could enclose a new civic space in lieu of the existing shop front parking and landscaped areas. Development of this garden site could also reinforce the spatial containment of the adjacent Cairngorm Hotel and improve linkages with the Railway Station.
- 13.72 The loss of this garden could be offset by development of the town centre public realm/civic spaces, and of new greenspaces within the Aviemore Highland Resort, along the Aviemore Burn corridor and of Spey Park.

B6 – Burn Corridor

- 13.73 The corridor of the Aviemore Burn should be realised as a key greenspace asset within the town centre, linking the AHR lands in the north-west (including new housing development) with the town centre itself and the Spey Corridor and An Camas Mor to the east. The presence of the burn should be recognised by the replacement of the existing culvert with a bridge allowing the continuation of pedestrian access under Grampian Road.
- 13.74 The establishment of a key greenspace within the town centre should be realised in combination with the removal of the ‘fun fair’ immediately to the west of the Grampian Road Bridge as this location would act as a key entrance point into the parkland corridor. In addition consideration should be given to the removal or relocation of the existing concrete block toilet building east of Grampian Road and the extension of the contemporary landscape design treatment that surrounds it to Grampian Road.



The development of this greenspace would also provide a positive focus for adjacent developments which could overlook the parkland and establish visual relationships with the wider countryside

B7 – Large building adjacent to Myrtlefield roundabout

- 13.75 This large former restaurant building is located at a strategic gateway location at the north end of the town centre. It is currently closed but future owner occupiers might provide an opportunity for some refurbishment or architectural remodelling. The building has a form akin to a village hall however its proximity to the roundabout/roads make it very prominent. It is important therefore that its large side elevation is not used for advertising or insensitive signage. Its public realm is equally prominent and should be of a consistent quality with the streetscape works (after enhancement) It would also benefit from architectural modifications to its conservatory in keeping with the style of the building.
- 13.76 In the longer term, this site and the adjacent outdoor sports shop and café might be considered for redevelopment in a way that creates a more positive relationship to the Aviemore burn corridor and the roundabout. Such a development could become

a landmark building(s) which defines the gateway to the town centre from the north. It is recognised that the existing outdoor sports shop is a very popular and successful business but it could be housed within a more dynamic building.

B8 – Public Realm Improvements



Public realm improvements should extend to Grampian Road carriageway as well as the adjacent pedestrian areas. This should seek to create a traffic-calmed shared surface environment for the core of the town, facilitating east to west movements by pedestrians.

- 13.77 Enhancement of Grampian Road between the railway station and the AHR Distributor Road/Grampian Road roundabout would reinforce the identity of the town centre while helping to achieve traffic calming and increasing pedestrian amenity in the 'core' of Aviemore. This type of work has already addressed the railway station forecourt and adjacent areas. It is proposed to extend these recent urban realm improvements northwards, incorporating the footways, carriageway and ideally the forecourt areas in private ownership, where they are of high prominence, eg to the front of the Cairngorms Hotel and certain shops. Pedestrian routes running from the Grampian Road corridor would also be given a high quality public realm treatment in order to complement new developments behind the Grampian Road frontage and to encourage/ acilitate pedestrian movement between the Aviemore Highland Resort and the retail/services core of the town. New civic spaces which adjoin Grampian Road would be of equally high quality and complementary in their detailing. Ideally these enhancements would utilise high quality natural stone pavements, eg Caithness slabs on footways and granite setts on the carriageway.
- 13.78 The vehicular extents of the town centre should be defined by two clear gateways within which the car is a 'visitor' to the pedestrian realm. These gateways should be iconic and well-defined by public art and welcome signage. They should be located at the northern end at the roundabout and at the southern end just south of the rail station by the entry to the Highland Resort.
- 13.79 Existing successful vernacular elements such as the drystone wall motif and the use of timber and glass for signage and structures should be extended into the centre of

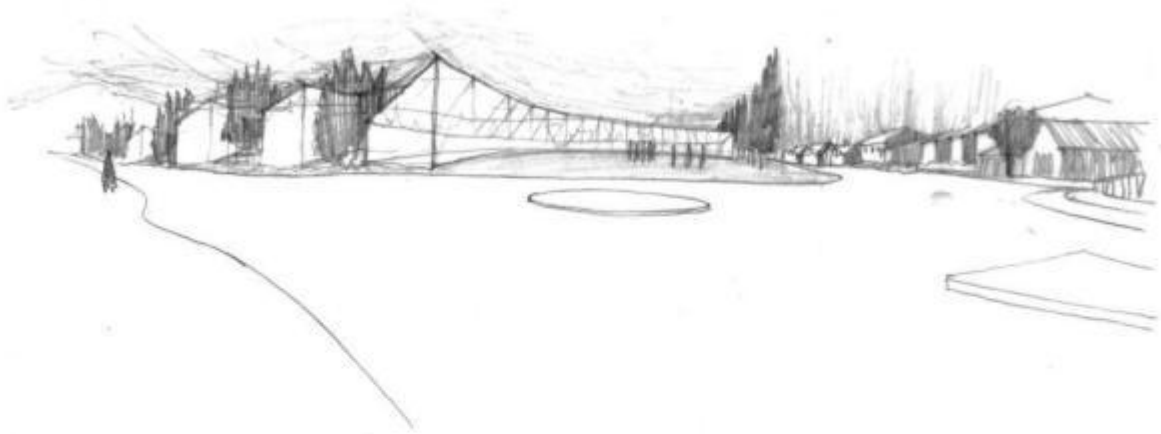
town. These should combine with high quality paving materials and furniture to create a strong identity for the centre. This identity or ‘brand’ should reflect the role of the town as a national focus for sport, outdoor recreation, education and landscape.

- 13.80 Parking in the town centre should be discreet and consolidated into two or three key locations which may be multi-storey. Minimisation of town centre space given over to cars and parking is essential.
- 13.81 Parking for major facilities should be accommodated to the rear, or west side of larger buildings where it relates visually to the A9 corridor and not the town centre. Parking that is at grade should be designed in an informal landscaped setting that reflects the local landscape via the use of native planting and local materials. There should be a departure from generic ‘business park/conference centre/suburban vernacular’. Car parks should be treated as an opportunity for good landscape design.

B9 – New supermarket site

- 13.82 This site is the preferred location for a new supermarket in Aviemore. It avoids the imposition of a large footprint bulk retail use in the core area and is more convenient for the majority of Aviemore’s residential population (in the northern part of the town). This reduces the need for vehicular traffic in the core area which will assist in placing more emphasis on pedestrians. Sensitive design of the new supermarket at the junction of Grampian Road and the Northern Link Road would contribute positively to the northern ‘gateway’ of the town centre. Buildings should present active frontages (accesses and windows) to the streets and parking should be provided to the rear of the building. The building should consider extensive use of natural materials.





B9 – General Commercial Property facelifts.

- 13.83 The proactive enhancement, refurbishment and redevelopment of commercial buildings fronting Grampian Road is to be encouraged to create a consistent and legible treatment that is distinctive to Aviemore. This would maintain active frontages to the Street and the removal of unnecessary clutter. This approach can be seen at the Myrtlefield Shopping Centre where a cohesive signage strategy has resulted in improvements to the building. The importance of maintaining and enhancing views from the town centre towards the Cairngorm mountains should be reflected in such schemes.

Area C: Northern Aviemore

- 13.84 The Northern Aviemore zone represents the extensive areas of housing to the north of the town centre. This comprises numerous contiguous housing schemes of different styles, reflecting their period of development. The zone also includes community facilities, amenity open spaces and pedestrian access routes/corridors. The Dalfaber section of Aviemore Highland Resort also falls within the north-eastern part of this zone.

Issues

- 13.85 There are considerable differences in character between the many housing schemes resulting from their varied approach to layout, massing, open space provision, use of materials and colour. This determines that there is little unity or singular character for Aviemore's residential areas and several schemes have applied sub-urban solutions found in many towns and cities.
- 13.86 While there are some essential community facilities within this zone, there are few 'corner' shops or equivalent, which necessitates travel to the town centre for most commodities. A well-used town centre is clearly a positive outcome but some additional 'convenience' facilities in the north of the town could help to reduce unnecessary car journeys and potentially provide a focus for other community activities.
- 13.87 The Orbital Path and a small number of link paths are valuable pedestrian access routes, but effective pedestrian/cycle routes between the northern housing areas and the town centre are few. Better linkages would help to reduce car dependency and traffic congestion/safety issues in the town centre.
- 13.88 The development of the new school on the existing playing field area will consolidate community facilities in this area and potentially make the school and associated community facilities more accessible to all housing areas, it will, however, remove a well used open space and this will require compensatory measures.
- 13.89 There is generally a scarcity of usable open spaces within the housing areas due to the density and layout of developments. More publicly accessible 'green' areas for socialising, play and biodiversity would be of value to the communities and could have modified the sub-urban character of some developments.
- 13.90 The Grampian Road Corridor within this zone becomes decreasingly 'urban' as one travels north. Close to the town centre the adjacent housing lines address the road corridor. Further north, the housing becomes introspective and is separated from the

road by planting belts. This transition requires to be carefully managed through the treatment of the public realm but also by consideration of rear elevations and back garden boundary fences where they address Grampian Road.

- 13.91 The Victorian Villas along the west side of Grampian Road are important buildings in Aviemore, representing some of the town's most architecturally significant buildings. However, some have been unsympathetically extended and most have had their gardens removed in order to provide parking spaces for guest house patrons.
- 13.92 Boundary fences are prominent features of the housing areas but they vary in size, type, quality and condition. There is a need to ensure consistency of quality and treatment within individual housing schemes and across the zone as a whole.

C1: Native Planting Framework

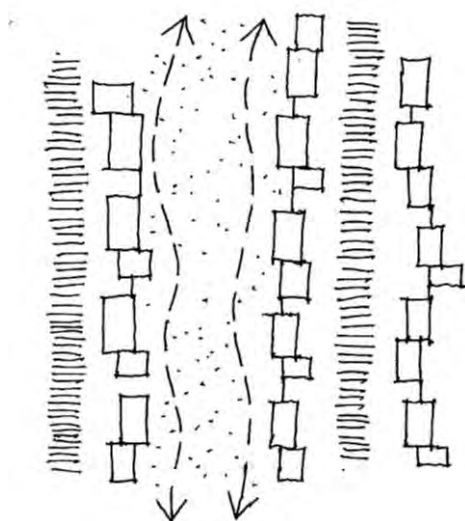
- 13.93 The lack of unity within the housing areas should be addressed through the consistent application of a soft landscape treatment which extends and reinforces the native woodland framework through the amenity areas, road corridors and open spaces. There already exist a number of native woodland belts and small pockets of trees and these form a useful basis for this approach. Reinforcement of the native woodland (birch and Scots pine dominated), shrub and wildflower planting will in itself provide a strong character for Aviemore, bringing the external landscape into the town. This approach will help to provide some unity to the many housing schemes and will 'soften' the present sub-urban qualities.
- 13.94 Existing stands of birch, aspen and Scots pine woodland within development areas should be protected and integrated within the layout of the new schemes.
- 13.95 Native planting within private gardens should also be promoted especially in areas which lack public open spaces or amenity areas such as verges.

C2: Community Facilities

- 13.96 Opportunities for the introduction of small scale community facilities in the northern housing developments should be examined either as part of new developments or potentially through conversion of existing properties. Ideally, such developments would provide convenience shopping for the outlying residential areas. There may also be opportunities for other community facilities, ideally associated with local open spaces.

C3: Public Access Links and Open Spaces

- 13.97 Completion of footpath/cycle route links within the Core Paths Plan should be pursued along with other access developments capable of improving linkages through and around Aviemore. North to south routes between the main housing areas and the town centre should be protected, enhanced or developed, if missing. The latter may require the definition of future access corridors and a strategy for the removal of obstacles in the longer term. Designated pedestrian/cyclist access routes to the new school site should be an objective. These may require pedestrian crossings on Grampian Road and routes parallel to the railway line leading from railway underpasses or road crossings. Preservation of a generous pedestrian access corridor along the course of the Aviemore Burn should be a priority, especially where it passes the northern section of the Aviemore Highland Resort.



Future housing restructuring can be designed to allow greenspace corridors as well as public realm links

C4: Grampian Road Corridor

13.98 Opportunities to improve the environmental quality of the Grampian Road corridor within this zone should be examined. Key measures would include:

- restoration and repair of front garden walls and gate pillars to older properties;
- restoration of soft landscape to the front gardens of Victorian Villas where possible, even the local introduction of trees in corner sites would be advantageous;
- modifications to fencing along the Grampian Road Corridor to achieve consistency of quality and colour. Some fences appear unnecessary and may warrant removal;
- review signage to ensure it is necessary, effective, appropriately sited and of suitable quality. This should ideally be undertaken in accordance with a signage strategy for Aviemore.

C5: Victorian Villas

13.99 A number of the Victorian Villas have been subject to later extensions or the addition of garages in close proximity. These extensions have generally compromised the symmetry of the building and have not achieved an appropriate quality. A common mistake has been an attempt to copy the original natural stone construction of the villa with Fyfe Stone blocks (or similar concrete facsimile). Extensions should have been carefully designed to consider the effects on the symmetry of these detached buildings, potentially examining options for extensions to the rear rather than the side. Extensions should be complementary to the original building but should be readable as contemporary architectural additions not an attempted facsimile of the villa.



C6: Fences

- 13.100 As discussed under General Design Guidance, there is a need to ensure that the extensive fences within this zone are of appropriate quality, type and condition for their location. While it is appropriate for the different housing schemes to have their own fencing solutions, it would strengthen the character of Aviemore if a restricted palette of stain colours was used and if replacement fencing could match the neighbouring fences. Vertical palisade type fencing is generally more sympathetic to the Highland landscape and should be used in new developments rather than horizontally boarded fences, which are sub-urban in character and less adaptable to varied topography.

C7: Lighting

- 13.101 In addition to the Grampian Road Corridor, extend the timber-columned street light solution to the residential streets within the 'Northern Territories zone. This should use lighting of a simpler form and smaller scale than currently used on Grampian Road, but should be consistent in style. This approach will help to strengthen the character of Aviemore and reinforce its message of sustainability. It is recognised that lighting replacements may not be due for some time, but when required there could be phased replacements.

Area D: Highland Resort

- 13.102 The Aviemore Highland Resort occupies a large area to the west of the town centre. This area has been incrementally developed over several decades without a cohesive masterplan. The result is an ad hoc development with no relationship to the town centre and comprising a number of large hotel, leisure and retail buildings together with numerous self catering apartments and lodges.
- 13.103 In 2007, Aviemore Highland Resort submitted a planning application for the future development of its lands on the west of the town. This application was supported by a masterplan and proposals for the buildings and public realm/landscape within the area. The application was subject to critical reviews by Architecture & Design Scotland and by Cairngorms National Park Authority. It was eventually granted detailed planning consent subject to a number of conditions.

Issues

- 13.104 Development of a well resolved masterplan for the Resort was made difficult by the arrangement of pre-existing buildings and their associated access arrangements. The lack of integration between the resort and the town centre was also a constraint. The result is a masterplan with little spatial cohesion in which roads and car parks dominate or sever the main open spaces.
- 13.105 The orientation of the existing Academy Hotel has established north-west and south-west running axes which have resulted in the inefficient division of spaces and a poor relationship with developments along Grampian Road. Architectural proposals for individual buildings within the masterplan were also criticised by Architecture & Design Scotland and there is significant scope for improvement in architectural design.

Aviemore Highland Resort: Design Opportunities

- 13.106 The Aviemore Highland Resort Masterplan represents a very significant development which has the potential to benefit the economy of Aviemore and surrounding area. It also represents a major opportunity to reverse or at least mitigate the effects of poor planning and design undertaken over the last 40 years. New developments within the Resort lands could help to achieve Aviemore’s vision and objectives. They could become a statement of architectural quality and sustainability. They have a campus setting in which buildings could be integrated with the landscape in innovative and sympathetic ways. There exists the opportunity for the resort to demonstrate the highest quality of contemporary yet contextual architecture. As with the ‘Homes for the Future’ development in Glasgow and the Highland Housing Expo’ there could be an opportunity to engage a number of leading contemporary architects in a collaboration which could result in dynamic development capable of raising Aviemore’s profile and reinforcing its identity.





13.107 While planning consent has been granted, it is still considered important to reinforce key design objectives as part of the Aviemore Urban Design Framework, these include the following:

- the Aviemore Burn corridor should be preserved as a strategic public access route (part of the Orbital Route) of generous width enabling it to function as a linear green space. The adjacent proposed housing should ideally demonstrate a positive relationship with the corridor, ie overlooking and incorporating access links. Existing vegetation along the burn should be preserved and a minimum distance of 20 metres retained between the burn edge and the nearest housing garden perimeter;
- the provisionally established pedestrian access link at Laurel Bank should be restored and improved as a key connection between the Resort and the town centre. Ideally, this link should continue through the Resort as a key pedestrian corridor with associated public realm treatment;
- car parks should be carefully integrated to minimise their prominence and to avoid sterilising key open spaces. For commercial buildings, containment of parking areas behind or inside development blocks should be considered. Car parks should also be set within landscape frameworks and have well defined pedestrian through routes. Permeable drainage systems and more informal surface treatments should be used for overflow/peak capacity areas;
- existing stands of native woodland should be protected and integrated in the development as positive features. New planting should utilise native species to extend the landscape character of Craigellachie across the Resort. Exotic planting should only be used in localised contained areas such as courtyards and private gardens. The exception to the above could be naturalised species such as beech, sycamore, lime and larch, but only with clear justification;
- natural woodland and scrub vegetation along the A9 corridor (western edge of the Resort) should be protected and maintained by positive management. This should be retained as a landscape framework for the site, i.e. screening and filtering views of the Resort from the A9. This protection is essential at the proposed Leisure Centre/Ice Arena site;
- proposed building developments within the Resort lands should be subject to an assessment of their visual impact and their visual relationships with the

surrounding landscape or nearby buildings, eg the Cairngorm Hotel. This should examine how the buildings can contribute positively to the character of Aviemore. Visual and spatial modelling should make it possible to examine how spaces and buildings will function and to test views through the resort.

Area E: Riverside Park

13.108 Aviemore’s Community Council has stated their ambition to establish a ‘park’ encompassing land on both sides of the River Spey from the north to south end of Aviemore. It would comprise water meadows, river embankments, riparian woodlands and fields to the east (between the Spey and An Camus Mor). This is an ambitious but hugely exciting opportunity to improve the relationship between Aviemore and the River Spey, to extend the access network along the river corridor, to provide more opportunities for active and passive recreation, and to facilitate management of the landscape and its important habitats. The proposed development of An Camus Mor also presents an opportunity to create useable greenspace capable of serving both communities and thus enabling social interaction. The impending loss of the playing fields to the new school development will also create a requirement for additional recreational greenspace which could be met by the ‘Riverside Park’ proposal.

Issues

- 13.109 Key issues with this proposal relate to access along and across the River Spey. On its western side the land is subject to occasional flooding, making continuous access difficult to maintain along the whole length, however, informal access routes already exist along much of the river side and these would form the basis of a riverside walkway, with the option of using Dalfaber Road during flood times. The informal routes connect with the Orbital footpath but pass through or around Resort lands in the north. Some access agreements may, therefore, be required to secure a continuous route.
- 13.110 The An Camas Mor development proposals show the potential for the construction of a footpath link causeway and footbridge over the River Spey, connecting with Aviemore town centre at the railway underpass and pocket park. A footbridge exists at the south end of Aviemore and could provide a link to the opposite bank, although from there a circular route would have to negotiate the former quarry site. There is currently no bridge over the Spey at the north end of the town and this would be required to complete a circular route on the east side of the Spey. All developments along the Spey corridor will be in ecologically sensitive and designated areas. They will, therefore, have to avoid or mitigate any ecological impacts.



Riverside Park Guidance

13.111 The Riverside Park proposal is at a preliminary stage and it is, therefore, difficult to be prescriptive, however it is possible to provide some outline guidance/recommendations:

- the development of a park along the Spey should incorporate a ‘country park’ character, retaining the informality and natural qualities of the landscape;
- access routes should be of informal construction but provide a surface suitable for all levels of mobility. Lighting should not be installed along the river edge;
- the option of developing a footbridge across the Spey in the north should be examined. This should ideally be located to provide a link with the Orbital Path, subject to meeting all requirements for nature conservation;
- the park proposal presents the opportunity to bring riverside woodlands and fields into positive management for nature conservation; and
- the development of the Riverside Park should be promoted within Aviemore town centre as an additional attraction and asset for the town.

