
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

Title: REPORT ON CALLED-IN PLANNING APPLICATION

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DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT)

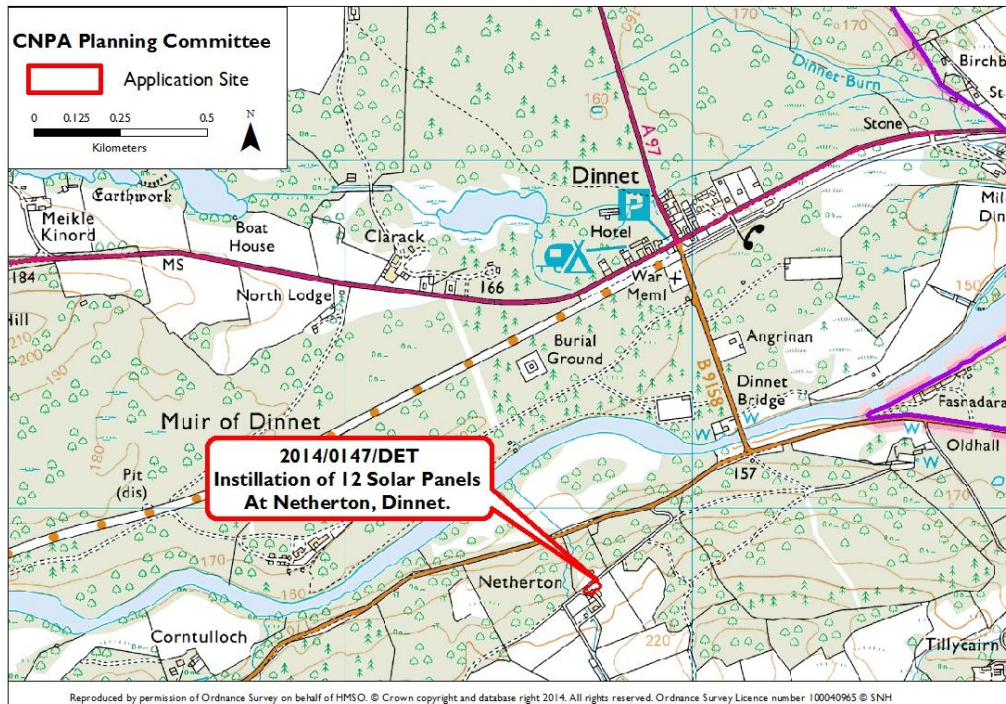
DEVELOPMENT PROPOSED: INSTALLATION OF 12 GROUND MOUNTED SOLAR PANELS AT NETHERTON FARMHOUSE, DINNET, ABOYNE

REFERENCE: 2014/0147/DET

APPLICANT: Mr Douglas Glass

DATE CALLED-IN: 19 May 2014

RECOMMENDATION: APPROVAL



Grid reference: E/797760, N/345713

Fig. 1 - Location Plan

SITE DESCRIPTION AND PROPOSAL

1. The application site forms part of the residential curtilage of the dwelling known as the Netherton Farmhouse at Dinnet within the wider community of Aboyne. Context of the site is given by its location as part of a former farmstead in open countryside to the south of the B976 and accessed by a private road and driveway. The row of solar panels would be located within part of the front curtilage of the dwelling which is enclosed by 2m high stone walls & buildings to the north and east. Adjacent to the south west is located a large barn and small field enclosed with a low stone wall which serves to further define the limited wider view of the site

Photo 1 Site Viewed from the Track



Development Proposal

2. This application relates to the installation of a double row of 12 ground-based solar panels located within the front lawn of the house and orientated to the south. Overall dimensions of the array would be 9.53m x 3.38m width, mounted on an anodized aluminium alloy frame at an angle of 30 degrees, with a height to the apex of 1.9m.
3. The solar panel array has been designed :
 - To provide up to 250kW of electricity
 - To withstand high wind loads and snow loads
 - To be constructed of anti-reflective highly transparent, low iron tempered glass

Figure 2: Site Plan and Panels as Proposed

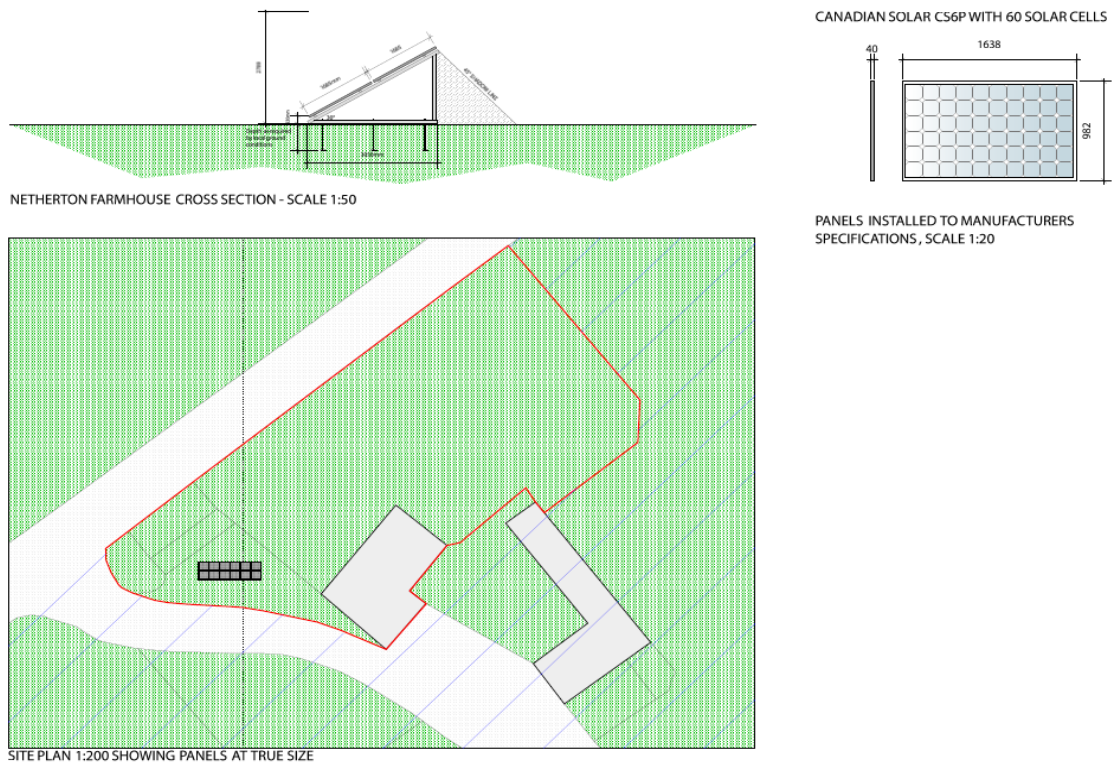


Photo 2 View North to Trackway



DEVELOPMENT PLAN CONTEXT

National Policy

4. **Scottish Planning Policy** (SPP, revised 2014) sets out national planning policies that reflect Scottish Ministers priorities for the operation of the planning system and for the development and use of land. Under planning law, planning applications must be determined according to the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The content of SPP is a material consideration in planning decisions that carries significant weight. The SPP promotes consistency in the application of policy across Scotland while allowing sufficient flexibility to reflect local circumstances.

The SPP sits alongside four other Scottish Government planning policy documents:

- The **National Planning Framework** (NPF) which provides the statutory framework for Scotland's long term spatial development. The NPF sets out the Scottish Government's spatial development policies for the next 20 to 30 years;
- **Creating Places**, the policy statement on architecture and place, containing the Scottish Government's policies and guidance on the importance of architecture and design;
- **Designing Streets**, a policy statement putting street design at the centre of placemaking. It contains policies and guidance on the design of new or existing streets and their construction, adoption and maintenance; and
- **Circulars**, which contain policy on the implementation of legislation or procedures.

Strategic Policies

Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan (2012 - 2017)

5. The Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2012 – 2017 is the management plan for the National Park for the next 5 years. It sets out the vision and overarching strategy for managing the Park and provides a strategic context for the Local Development Plan. Three long term outcomes have been identified to deliver the vision for the Park, to continue the direction set out in the first National Park Plan and to together deliver the four aims of the National Park. The outcomes are :
 - A sustainable economy supporting thriving businesses and communities;
 - A special place for people and nature with natural and cultural heritage enhanced; and
 - People enjoying the park through outstanding visitor and learning experiences.

Local Plan Policy

Cairngorms National Park Local Plan (2010)

6. The Cairngorms National Park Local Plan was formally adopted on 29th October 2010. The full text can be found at :
<http://www.cairngorms.co.uk/parkauthority/publications/results.php?publicationID=265>
7. The Local Plan contains a range of policies dealing with particular interests or types of development. These provide detailed guidance on the best places for development and the best ways to develop. The policies follow the three key themes of the Park Plan to provide a detailed policy framework for planning decisions:
 - Chapter 3 - Conserving and Enhancing the Park;
 - Chapter 4 - Living and Working in the Park;
 - Chapter 5 - Enjoying and Understanding the Park.
8. Policies are not cross referenced and applicants are expected to ensure that proposals comply with all policies that are relevant. The site-specific proposals of the Local Plan are provided on a settlement by settlement basis in Chapter 6. These proposals, when combined with other policies, are intended to meet the sustainable development needs of the Park for the Local Plan's lifetime. The following paragraphs list a range of policies that are appropriate to consider in the assessment of the current development proposal.
9. Policy 6: Landscape states that there will be a presumption against any development that does not complement and enhance the landscape character of the Park, and in particular, the setting of the proposed development. Proposed development that does not complement and enhance the landscape character of the Park and the setting of the proposed development will be permitted only where any significant adverse effects on the landscape character of the Park are clearly outweighed by social or economic benefits of national importance and all adverse effects on the setting of the proposed development have been minimised and mitigated through appropriate siting, layout, scale, design and construction to the satisfaction of the planning authority.
- 9 Policy 15: Renewable Energy Generation states that development for small scale renewable energy schemes which support the aims of the Cairngorms National Park and the National Park Plan strategic objective regarding energy production, will be favourably considered where they contribute positively to the minimisation of climate change, and where they complement the sustainability credentials of the development. Development will be sited to have no significant adverse visual or landscape impact or neighbouring properties or any unacceptable impact on the environment.

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- 10 In addition to the adoption of the Cairngorms National Park Local Plan (2010), a number of Supplementary Planning Guidance documents were also Adopted; none of which are directly relevant to the current application.

CONSULTATIONS

- 11 **CNPA Landscape Adviser:** No objections have been raised in respect of this application.
12. **Defence Infrastructure Organisation:** No safeguarding objections to this proposal.
13. **CNPA Natural Heritage Team:** No ecological issues are raised in relation to this proposal.

REPRESENTATIONS

14. None

APPRAISAL

15. This application is required to be considered and determined in accordance with Development Plan policies unless there are material considerations which would indicate otherwise.
16. Development Plan Policy 15 is supportive of projects based on the generation of renewable energy, provided the development would have no significant adverse or landscape impact on the environment or landscape.
17. Significant screening would be provided by walls, nearby barns and curtilage buildings, sufficient to screen the panels from any wider view. As such, further landscape mitigation by condition would be unnecessary. The aims of Policy 6 of the Development Plan would be met with landscape impacts, in effect, being localised to the immediate vicinity of the house and neighbouring field associated with the dwelling. Overall, the proposed development would not result in any discernible adverse effects upon the wider landscape character of the National Park.

Conclusion

18. On balance, the proposed development would comply with the current Development Plan policies and there are no material considerations which would indicate that planning permission should not be granted.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE AIMS OF THE NATIONAL PARK

Conserve and Enhance the Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Area

19. The proposal will not have a direct impact on this aim.

Promote Sustainable Use of Natural Resources

20. The proposal will harness solar energy.

Promote Understanding and Enjoyment of the Area

21. The proposal will not have a direct impact on this aim.

Promote Sustainable Economic and Social Development of the Area

22. The proposal will not have a direct impact on this aim.

RECOMMENDATION

That Members of the Committee support a recommendation to GRANT planning permission for the installation of 12 solar panels subject to the following advice note:

Advice Notes:

1. In accordance with section 58(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended), this permission lapses on the expiration of a period of 3 years beginning with the date on which this permission is granted unless the development to which this permission relates is begun before that expiration.

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Date 24 June 2014

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