
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

Title: REPORT ON CALLED-IN PLANNING APPLICATION

Prepared by: NEIL STEWART (PLANNER, DEVELOPMENT CONTROL)

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSED: FULL PLANNING PERMISSION FOR ERECTION OF VISITOR CENTRE (INCLUDING CRAFT WORKSHOPS, RETAIL, AND CAFETERIA), 6 NO. DWELLINGHOUSES AND GARAGES, AND ASSOCIATED ACCESS ROAD AND PARKING AREAS, NETHY BRIDGE STATION YARD, STATION ROAD, NETHY BRIDGE

REFERENCE: 04/318/CP

APPLICANT: MR. & MRS. ECCLES, CROFT BANK, NETHY BRIDGE, AND NETHY GREEN LTD.

DATE CALLED-IN: 8TH JULY, 2004

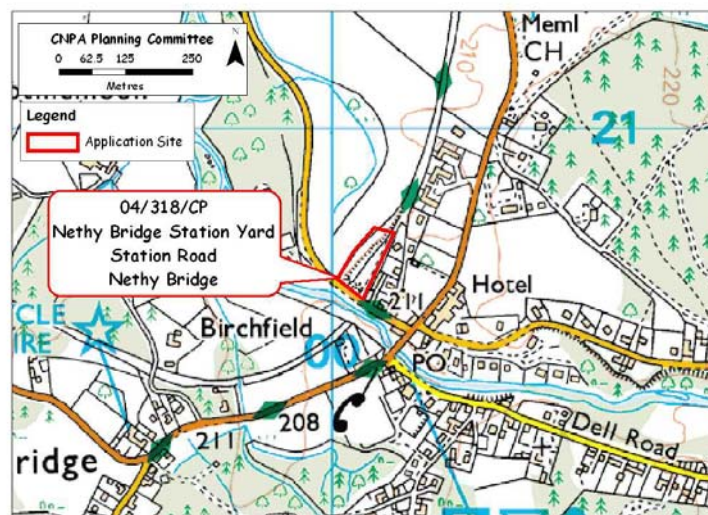


Fig. 1 - Location Plan

SITE DESCRIPTION AND PROPOSAL

1. The site to which this application relates is located on the west side of Nethy Bridge but on the north side of Station Road which exits the village heading northwards past the Waste Water Treatment Works towards Broomhill Station and the A95. The site is the former Station Yard at Nethy Bridge where there are remnants of the former railway use with the original platform and the former station building (not within the site) which is now a Bunkhouse operated by the current applicants. The land is unused and in some places overgrown. However, the Speyside Way walkway follows the line of the former railway line here and passes through the proposed site. To the west side of the site there is open agricultural land at a lower level. On the east side are several houses, one of which ("Tigh na Brolich") is accessed through the proposed site.
2. In June 2002, Highland Council granted Outline Planning Permission for the Development of 4 House Plots, Studio Offices, Tearoom/Community Facility/Flat and Access Road on this site (02/00011OUTBS). The recommendation had been one of refusal from Highland Council's Area Planning Manager primarily on the basis that it did not accord with the Badenoch and Strathspey Local Plan which allocates the land for a variety of business uses rather than housing development and that there was a lack of capacity at the WWTW. However, the Area Committee's decision was to grant, subject to conditions, including a requirement that no dwellinghouse could be built prior to the upgrade of the WWTW and that the Speyside Way route should be preserved. This permission expired in June 2005 but it remained extant when the current application was submitted back in June 2004.
3. The proposals which are the subject of this report are significant amendments to those which were originally submitted and called-in in 2004. The original proposals were for the Construction of a Tearoom, Offices, 9 No. Dwellinghouses and the Access Road. Following considerable concern about a number of matters, including over development and concerns from consultees, the applicants have gone through a lengthy process of amending their proposals and submitting further information.
4. The proposals now comprise the formation of an access road in a central position onto Station Road with one of the houses on its east side and the Visitor Centre on its west side but with both buildings fronting Station Road. The access road then heads northwards with the other five detached houses on its west side. Each house has its own separate access with on site parking and turning space. The houses are four or five bedroomed and are either one and a half or one and three quarter storeys in height. The levels on the site indicate that the houses will be at a lower level to the access road. The finishing materials are wall render, slate roofs, some larch cladding, and timber windows and doors. The Visitor Centre is to house a number of related activities which include two craft workshops for the proposed occupier's furniture restoration business and related uses, 35sqm. of retail space for the sale of furniture, crafts and materials, and 35sqm. of cafeteria space. This

café element would provide teas, coffees and light snacks and it would not operate outwith the opening times of the rest of the building, nor would it provide a takeaway service or be licensed. Included in the design is an outlook tower feature with viewing balcony at the first floor level facing north west. This building will be finished in larch cladding to the walls, slate to the roof, and timber windows and doors. Parking for 9 cars is indicated on the building's north side.

5. Also included within the development site is a parking area for 9 cars related to the existing Nethy Station Bunkhouse which is situated on the old platform on the east side. This bunkhouse is owned and operated by one of the applicants but is outwith the proposed site. However, it is the subject of a current application with Highland Council, for alterations and extensions to help improve this visitor facility and meet the requirements of the disabled discrimination act. As part of this general upgrade, the provision of formalised and specific parking for the bunkhouse on the application site will help alleviate current problems of vehicular access and parking in the vicinity, associated with the bunkhouse use. In addition to this parking the application also proposes a parking and turning area for 6 cars at the head of the proposed access road where it connects to the Speyside Way on the former railway line.
6. Accompanying the revised scheme, is a supporting “**Design Statement**” which provides information on the project, including background, details of design and layout, parking and access, and drainage. Members will also not the detailed information on the applicant's proposals for incorporating sustainable design principles in the development including low energy usage, dynamic ventilation systems, and waste strategies. **This Design Statement is attached for the Committee's information.**

DEVELOPMENT PLAN CONTEXT

7. In the **Highland Structure Plan 2001, Policy G2 (Design for Sustainability)** states that developments will assessed on the extent to which they, amongst other things, are compatible with service provision (water, sewerage, roads etc.); are accessible by public transport, cycling and walking; maximise energy efficiency in terms of location, layout and design, including the utilisation of renewable sources of energy; make use of brownfield sites, existing buildings and recycled materials; impact on community and individual residential amenity; impact on natural resources; demonstrate sensitive siting and high quality design; promote varied, lively and well-used environments; and contribute to the economic and social development of the community. **Housing policy strategy** directs housing development generally to existing settlements.
8. **Policy B7 (Business Development in Rural Areas)** states that small-scale business development or extensions to existing indigenous industries will be encouraged in rural areas. Sites for small scale workshops, including ones attached to new housing developments are encouraged. **Policy T2 (Tourism**

Developments) supports high quality tourism proposals, particularly those which extend the tourism season, provide wet weather opportunities, spread economic benefits more widely, are accessible by means other than private vehicles and provide opportunities for the sustainable enjoyment and interpretation of the area's heritage. **Policy L4 (Landscape Character)** seeks to ensure that regard is had to the desirability of the maintaining and enhancing present landscape character in the consideration of development proposals.

9. The site is allocated in the **Badenoch and Strathspey Local Plan, 1997**, under **Policy 4.2.1. (Business) of the Nethy Bridge Settlement Statement** as wholly for business/industry uses. However, the policy states that the site could accommodate service enterprises, related accommodation and storage; or tourist uses including self-catering, hostel, other accommodation, or related commercial activity. Uses and activities will require to be compatible with neighbouring residential amenity. The Local Plan sets out its main objectives for Nethy Bridge. These include, amongst other things; ensuring that new development maintains a scale and form compatible with the village character and reflects the "street" layout; protecting the village setting, most notably the adjoining semi-natural woodlands, open land and river edges; avoiding encroachment of development onto open land outwith Nethy Bridge, and reinforcing the disused railway as the village limits to the west; and helping strengthen and diversifying the economic base of the community. Other general policies which are relevant include **Policy 2.2.1(a) (Economic Development)** which encourages new economic development where it is consistent with the maintenance of a clean environment. **Policy 2.2.9 (Tourism and Recreation)** states that these activities will continue to make a vital contribution to the economy. The priority is to ensure that broadening the range and quality of facilities is balanced with protecting the area's exceptional scenic and heritage resources. In addition, **Policy 2.2.10 (Tourism)** encourages the development of tourist accommodation and facilities at suitable sites, within or immediately adjoining communities.
10. **For information**, in the **Preliminary Consultation Draft CNPA Local Plan** the site lies within the settlement boundary but there is no proposed zoning for any particular use. Three sites are zoned in the plan for housing but these relate to sites which already have planning permission. The settlement statement advises that these represent a considerable amount of housing for the village and no further short-term sites are to be zoned for this plan period. Outwith these allocated sites, infill sites for single houses may be considered. In relation to business and employment uses, the settlement statement advises that the general economy of the Nethy Bridge area is traditional land-based activity with a large sector based around tourism and services. Proposals to enhance and diversify the local economy will be supported in principle. The plan does zone under **Policy site B1** a modest sized business site elsewhere in Nethy Bridge. In relation to tourism, **Policy Recommendation T1** states that proposals for the development of new, or enhancement of existing tourism attractions/facilities will be favourably considered.

CONSULTATIONS

11. **Scottish Water** initially stated that there was no capacity available at the Nethy Bridge WWTW, for the level of development proposed in the first scheme submitted. However, they have subsequently advised that because of the current upgrade at the WWTW, capacity will become available for the development and that a connection would be permitted.
12. In relation to foul drainage, **SEPA** initially objected to the proposal on the basis that there was no capacity at the WWTW. The applicants at that stage, then proposed a private treatment works discharging to a soakaway. However, **SEPA** also objected to this, on the basis that the development is in a sewered settlement area, where an unacceptable precedent for private foul drainage systems within settlements could be set, causing the potential for increased pollution to surface waters and health problems in the form of odour. At that time, **SEPA** advised that the development should not be permitted until such time as the sewerage infrastructure for Nethy Bridge was upgraded. With the WWTW upgrade now underway, and with Scottish Water's advice that a connection can now be made, this objection no longer stands.
13. With regard to surface water drainage, **SEPA** require SUDS in accordance with CIRIA C521. Percolation tests have been carried out and the applicant's engineers are proposing a series of individual soakaways and infiltration trenches. At the time of writing, **SEPA** still require some additional information on the SUDS. They also require more than one level of surface water treatment for the non-residential elements of the development.
14. **Highland Council's Area Roads Manager** has had several rounds of correspondence on the proposal. A number of conditions, relating to footpath provision, visibility splays, parking and surfacing all to adoptable standards were required on the original scheme. Due to the level of development proposed, it would have been difficult to achieve all the requirements. The revised layout now meets almost all the conditions (with the exception of a footpath or 2m wide verge along the entire east side of the access road). **The Roads Manager** has advised that the road can only be considered for adoption if all the standards can be met but that if this cannot be achieved, then a formal management and maintenance agreement would be required. In relation to parking on the site, on balance, the **Roads Manager** advises that it is adequate.
15. **Highland Council's Area Planning and Building Control Manager** noted the significant changes in scale and content between the **original submitted scheme** and what was proposed at the outline stage. He also drew attention to the fact that Highland Council are dealing with an application for the upgrade of the adjoining bunkhouse and that the parking for that development is within the present application site. He did not feel that final consideration could be given to the bunkhouse application until such time as the present application was determined.

16. **Highland Council's Scientific Officer** has stated that in light of the site's previous use as a railway goods yard, the applicant should provide evidence that the site is suitable for its proposed use, and there are no potential contamination issues. This should follow the guidance on land contamination in PAN 33 and BS10175:2001. A condition can be imposed to this effect.
17. **The CNPA Access Officer** advises that following discussions with the officers of Highland Council and the Speyside Way Route Manager, there are no fundamental problems with this application. It would be in the applicant's interests to support the Speyside Way as there would be direct commercial benefit from its users, who may visit the visitor centre element. Nevertheless it is recommended that there should be a condition to ensure that the route remains open and clearly marked during the construction of the development. The applicants should also liaise with the Speyside Way Route Manager over the relocation of the existing Speyside Way Interpretation Board on the site.
18. **The CNPA Natural Heritage Group** have advised that the site is a brownfield one with the remains of road and gravel areas, and reverted grassland. Most of the birch trees are outwith the site. It is therefore of only minor natural heritage value but support is given to the provision of new planting which should be of local/native provenance.
19. **The Nethy Bridge and Vicinity Community Council** made comments on **the original proposal** where they had concerns about the density of housing and the fact that it would seem to have been against the Local Plan allocation. With regard to the commercial aspects they felt that a tearoom and a youth facility were two uses which the village needed and they generally felt that these elements of the plans would be an asset. Further to the submission of **the revised proposals**, the applicants have explained their amended scheme at a recent Community Council meeting. Further to this, there has been verbal agreement from the Community Council that they are generally in favour of the proposal.

REPRESENTATIONS

20. For ease, copies of all letters of representation received throughout the process (both objectors and applicants/agents) are attached. However, it should be noted that most of the letters refer to matters relating to and considered on **the original submission**, some of which have now been superseded by the revisions.
21. At the time of **the original submission**, 5 letters were received which raised issues of concern. These included;
 - *the lack of sewage capacity and the potential for contamination;*
 - *concern at the levels of noise and rubbish from the tea room element of the development;*

- *the type of housing for sale and its appropriateness for local people – could be second/holiday homes;*
 - *overdevelopment of the site;*
 - *the design and width of the road, the level of parking provision on the site and the need for cycle storage facilities;*
 - *the possibility of overlooking of neighbouring properties due to levels on the site; and*
 - *concerns about the possibility of the offices becoming more bunkhouse accommodation.*
22. Three letters were subsequently received from the applicants/agents which responded to the points raised.
23. On the submission **of the revised proposal**, the applicants were asked to re-notify the neighbours. One further letter of representation has been received. The matters raised include;
- *continued concern about levels of parking on the site;*
 - *requirements to ensure that the tearoom does not operate as a take-away;*
 - *continued concern about potential contamination of water sources;*
 - *continued concerns about overdevelopment and the type of housing that is proposed – holiday homes not for local people;*
 - *continued concerns about the potential for overlooking because of levels on the site;*
 - *road appears to be still single track only;*
 - *concerns about the viability of the project and that the site may be left partially completed; and*
 - *site is important being at the entrance to Nethy Bridge on this side.*
24. The agent has responded to the points raised.
25. **The applicant's agent, (Mr. Richard Atkins) has requested to address the Committee.**

APPRAISAL

26. The issues that this revised proposal raise include the principle of the development and its uses in relation to land use policy, the impact of the revised layout, building designs and mixed uses, on the character of the area and the amenity of adjacent properties, and the technical issues of access, drainage, parking and contaminated land.

Principle

27. The owners of the land (Mr. & Mrs Eccles) have advised that proceeds from the sale of the land for the development would enable them to channel funds into their existing tourist related businesses in Nethy Bridge (the adjacent

Bunkhouse and the Nethy Guest House), thereby sustaining their future viability. These businesses sustain 2 full time and 3 part time jobs and generated last year a throughput of over 10,000 bed spaces. It is stated that they need to remain competitive, and that improving their facilities (such as extending the building and formalising parking at the Bunkhouse, and meeting the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act) is vital in order to sustain the businesses and the wider provision of visitor accommodation in the village. It is within this general "enabling" context, therefore that the development can be considered.

28. Further to significant concerns about various aspects of the original proposal for 9 houses, tearoom and offices, (including overdevelopment, inability to meet roads standards, emphasis on residential rather than non-residential uses, and availability of sewage capacity), the applicants have revisited their proposals. However, in addition to these planning concerns, Mr. & Mrs. Eccles have also advised that after extensive research into the viability of a stand alone tearoom/café (which included national and local advertisements for operators and managers, and discussions with local enterprise backers) a reluctant conclusion, that it would not be financially viable, has been reached. Also, with regard to the proposed offices, they have closely watched the current local economic climate and demand for this type of use but, despite actively seeking interested parties, they have found that many businesses of the type that could take up the space, have already established themselves working from recently converted premises or home. Nevertheless, after considerable efforts, one interested party has been found as an end user for a commercial type facility. This has resulted in the proposal for the mixed business/tourism building (known as the visitor centre) now proposed at the entrance to the development.
29. The land in question represents a brownfield site within a settlement. In the Badenoch and Strathspey Local Plan, bearing in mind its former railway station yard use, it is allocated for business/industry use. However, the associated policy (4.2.1.) advises that the site could accommodate service enterprises, tourist uses or other related commercial activity which would be compatible with neighbouring residential amenity. The previous outline application proposed the erection of 4 houses, studio offices and a tearoom/community facility with associated flat. This was approved by Highland Council's Area Committee, despite the allocation for non-residential development in the Local Plan. This previous approval, although not related to the current proposal (not a reserved matters application linked to the outline) was extant at the time of the submission of the current application. It established the principle of some residential development on the site as part of a wider mixed use proposal. This approval, therefore remains a significant material consideration.
30. One of the main concerns raised by the original submission for 9 houses, tearoom and offices was the changed emphasis from an equally balanced mix of commercial and residential uses at the time of the outline permission, to one where the emphasis was on residential. It was questionable, at that time, that support could be given to a development which represented primarily a

residential development, with some secondary commercial uses (with no clear end users), on a site which was still identified as being for business type development in the Local Plan.

31. The proposed mixed business/tourism building in the current scheme does fit with the Local Plan allocation and the number of houses has now been reduced to six. However, the more significant land use does still remain as residential (not affordable either) and it could be argued that this does not strictly fit with the aspirations of the extant Local Plan or the aims of the Park.
32. Nevertheless, it is necessary to consider the wider context. The land in question was not taken up for business use prior to the current applicants taking ownership and there is another business site allocated in the Badenoch and Strathspey Local Plan (which the draft CNPA Local Plan intends to keep). The applicants have made considerable efforts to find viable commercial/tourist uses for their development but with significant difficulty.
33. Notwithstanding this though, they have managed to secure an end user who is prepared to develop a business and associated tourist facility (with the potential for some community use). A letter from the proposed occupant of the building, confirming their intentions, has been submitted. This facility is very much welcomed in terms of the social and economic development of the area as it provides the opportunity to have a workable small scale workshop based business with a related visitor type facility at an important location at the western entrance to Nethy Bridge and on the route of the Speyside Way. The proposed uses in the building are also more compatible with the primarily residential character of the adjacent surroundings, than perhaps a more industrial type use. In addition, the perceived loss of land to business uses, can be, to a degree, off set by the fact that the development will allow for investment in other tourist type businesses in the village. The Community Council are now providing their general support for the proposal and the CNPA Local Plan consultation process has not thrown up any concerns about the development of this land for mixed residential/commercial uses. The fact that an approval for a mixed residential/commercial use development existed at the time of the original submission in 2004 also carries some weight. The site's location on the western approaches to Nethy Bridge and directly on the Speyside Way also raises the question whether it is appropriate to have the land purely for business/industrial uses, as designated in the extant Local Plan, or whether a mixed residential/business/tourist use, would afford a better opportunity to provide a sympathetic and quality development which would not impact on the surroundings.
34. It seems unlikely at this stage that the land will be developed purely for the business/industrial uses envisaged in the Badenoch and Strathspey Local Plan and it is questionable whether or not this is wholly appropriate in this important location in any case. **The proposal now put forward, in my view, provides the best opportunity to develop a site which is, within the settlement boundaries, carries brownfield status, will be compatible with its surroundings, and will provide social and economic benefits to Nethy**

Bridge both on site and off site. On balance, I can therefore provide my support for the principle of the development and its uses.

Impact on the Area and Design and Layout

35. As intimated above, the site is an important one because of its location on the western edge of the village and directly on the Speyside Way. The Local Plan does emphasise the importance of land adjoining the settlement edges on the setting of the community. The site is within the settlement boundaries but it does provide an edge to the western approach and therefore the visual impact of any development is important to the setting and character of this side of Nethy Bridge. The business/tourist centre building is located at the entrance to the development and is a modest sized structure. However, it incorporates a tower feature on its roadside corner. While this makes the building more prominent, I feel it accentuates the entrance to the village and provides a focal point for the building. While higher than other roofs in the development, the tower is not out of scale and it provides an interesting feature in terms of marking the change from the countryside to the more urban setting. The use of slate and timber on this building is also appropriate.
36. Considerable work has been carried out by the applicants and their agent in relation to the design of the proposed houses. It was felt that the original design proposals were not entirely appropriate for such an important site. The revisions now indicate houses which display traditional proportions, roof pitches and detailing. The use of slate, harling and timber emphasises the more traditional approach. Due to the configuration of the site, apart from Plot 1, the houses are positioned along the western side but with their frontages facing eastwards towards the village. However, they have been designed to take advantage of the views in the westwards direction and therefore the elevations are not obviously seen, in design terms, as being the ones to the rear. Although, some of the houses are one and three quarter storeys in height, the level change to the west side of the site mitigates any adverse visual impact in terms of scale. The boundary treatment though requires careful consideration and appropriate boundary enclosures and landscaping is essential to produce a satisfactory appearance to this edge. Also an important consideration in the design of the buildings is the sustainable design approach to the buildings as promoted in the supporting "Design Statement" and this is very much welcomed in relation to the promotion of sustainable development in the Park.
37. The letter of representation received in relation to the revised proposal continues to raise some issues about over development, overlooking, site levels, and impact of the tearoom facility. I do not now view the proposal as over development. Each house is provided with an adequate amount of garden space and the distances between houses, windows, boundaries and gardens is acceptable. The distance between windows in the new houses and windows in the representee's house is approximately 25m at its least. The application provides a site section which demonstrates how the site levels will be dealt with and I do not consider that there would be any detrimental effect on any neighbouring property. The tearoom facility is primarily ancillary

to the main use of the craft workshop business and it is not intended as a takeaway facility. Conditions can be imposed to this effect and it is also the case that further permissions are likely if this position changes. I do not view the business/tourism building as causing any potential conflict with nearby residential properties in terms of amenity.

38. **To conclude, significant progress has been made on all the issues surrounding impact on the area and design and I am satisfied that there are no policies breached in this regard. The development will also allow for the retention of the Speyside Way at this location. While the character of the walk will change here, it is only a very short stretch, and the siting of the business/tourism building is seen as positive in terms of providing a facility that could be exploited by users of the route.**

Infrastructure Implications

39. The final matters to be considered are the implications for roads, parking, drainage and contaminated land.
40. One of the main concerns about the original scheme was the inability of the development, because of the amount of development proposed, to meet adoptable roads standards and parking requirements. With the level of development now reduced there is more space on the site to achieve the standards. The Roads Manager has confirmed that, on balance, the proposed parking provision for the commercial facility is now acceptable, bearing in mind that the new formalised parking area for the Bunkhouse could be used as an overspill if necessary. The applicants wish the road to be adopted by Highland Council. However, there is still a requirement for some amendments to the layout (2m wide verge required on the south east side beyond the traffic calming feature) before they can accept it for adoption. It may be possible to amend the layout slightly to accommodate this. However, the Roads Manager has also said that if not adopted, he could accept the layout provided there was a formalised management and maintenance agreement in place. This can be conditioned. Visibility splays at the junction of the access and the public road can be achieved (adjoining landowners have provided written agreement to maintaining a portion of their land free from anything over 1m in height) and all other roads matters can be dealt with by planning condition.
41. With regard to drainage, the capacity at the existing WWTW has been an issue. Being a "committed" development, the original outline permission granted in 2002 was included in Scottish Water's calculations when considering the upgrade of the WWTW (currently ongoing). However, the original submission for 9 houses, tearoom and offices submitted in 2004, would have increased the amount of connections and subsequently the loadings on the system and therefore was unlikely to be acceptable. With the reduction in the level of development proposed, the number of connections has now been reduced to 7 - the same as the outline permission. The applicant's engineers have also provided calculations on the actual loadings going into the system. These calculations actually demonstrate that, even

with the same number of connections, the current proposal results in a lesser loading than the original outline permission due to the type of uses now proposed. Scottish Water have advised that a connection can be made when the upgrade of the WWTW is completed but they work on a "first come first served" basis. The important consideration is that there will now be no additional loading on the system which will prejudice the ability of the WWTW to accommodate other "committed" developments in Nethy Bridge. With regard to SUDS, the basis of a scheme has been designed with a series of soakaways and infiltration trenches. A planning condition can be imposed to require further details and the correct levels of treatment. This satisfies SEPA and should ensure that the representee's concerns about potential contamination of surface water is covered.

42. Finally, Highland Council's Contaminated Land Officer and the applicant have agreed that the matter of contaminated land can be covered by a standard condition requiring full investigations and proposed mitigation measures in the event of contamination being found, prior to any works commencing on site.

Conclusion

43. This application has raised a number of difficult issues and the need to significantly revise the scheme has taken a while to bring the matter to a conclusion. However, I now feel that, on balance, support can be given for the revised scheme. There is a proportion, but not whole scale, loss of business/industrial land, as allocated in the extant Local Plan. However, the proposed development does now provide the best opportunity to developing the site in an acceptable manner, with uses compatible with its surroundings and in a manner which will provide some on and off site social and economic benefits to Nethy Bridge. There is general support from the community and all technical issues can now be overcome.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE AIMS OF THE NATIONAL PARK

Conserve and Enhance the Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Area

44. The site at present consists of largely overgrown rough ground which in parts has exposed hardcore or low walls that formed part of the Station Yard. There are a few trees on the site, and these will be removed along with all the scrub to allow the development to take place. However, there is no significant natural heritage value to the site and new native planting throughout the scheme will provide the opportunity to enhance the development on what is a brownfield site within a settlement. The designs of the buildings are now respectful of the traditional built heritage of the area.

Promote Sustainable Use of Natural Resources

45. The supporting "Design Statement" promotes the use of sustainable design principles in terms of the environmental performance of the proposed buildings. There is also considerable use of timber as a finishing material.

The development also results in the redevelopment of a brownfield site within a settlement rather than one in a more remote area where reliance on the car would be necessary.

Promote Understanding and Enjoyment of the Area

46. The development will allow for the continuation of the Speyside Way through the site, and the existing Interpretation Board will be relocated within the site as part of the redevelopment. The visitor centre with its associated retail and cafeteria, will be an additional facility for walkers along the route and will provide the opportunity to promote the products of a local business.

Promote Sustainable Economic and Social Development of the Area

47. The partial loss of allocated business/industrial land as promoted in the Badenoch and Strathspey Local Plan, is considered as negative in terms of this aim. However, this is off-set by the provision of some business/tourist uses (which may also provide some community use and the potential for creation of jobs, including apprentice opportunities for young local people) on the site, and by the potential investment that the proceeds from the development can bring to other existing visitor accommodation businesses in the village. The upgrade of these other facilities will improve their sustainability and increase their ability to generate further economic benefits to existing businesses in the village such as the shop. The housing is not affordable and not necessarily geared to local needs but planning policy does not require an affordable provision on developments of less than 10 units. It is also the case that a considerable amount of the need for affordable/low cost housing is being taken up elsewhere in Nethy Bridge.

RECOMMENDATION

48. **That Members of the Committee support a recommendation to:**

Grant Full Planning Permission for the Erection of a Visitors Centre (Including Craft Workshops, Retail and Cafeteria), 6 No. Dwellinghouses and Garages, and Associated Access Road and Parking Areas, at Nethy Bridge Station Yard, Station Road, Nethy Bridge, subject to the following conditions:

NB. PLEASE NOTE THAT THE FOLLOWING IS A SUMMARY OF THE PROPOSED CONDITIONS. EXACT WORDING WILL FOLLOW AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AND PRIOR TO THE COMMITTEE

Conditions will cover:

Standard time condition.

No occupation of any building until connection to public foul water system is available.

No development on site until details of SUDS scheme agreed (incorporating appropriate levels of treatment)

No development on site until on site investigations for contaminated land carried out and any required mitigation measures completed.

No takeaway facility at cafeteria.

No occupation of the visitor centre until its associated car park has been completed.

Requirement to complete the parking for the adjacent Bunkhouse prior to the occupation of the visitor centre.

Speyside Way route retained in perpetuity and during construction (alternatives provided if necessary with associated signage)

Requirement for relocation of existing Speyside Way interpretation boards.

Requirement for retaining vehicular access through the site to the property known as "Tigh na Brolich", during construction.

Requirement for submission, implementation and maintenance of native tree planting and landscaping scheme.

Requirement for submission of details of all hard surfacing materials.

Requirement for submission of details and specifications for all building finishing materials, colours and window details.

Boundary enclosure details not approved. Requirement for alternative boundary enclosure details to be submitted.

Requirement for access road to be built and completed to adoptable standards (prior to occupation) or be the subject of a formal management and maintenance agreement, subject to engineering details being agreed.

Requirement for visibility splay and footpath provision, surfacing, and parking and turning space, and cycle storage.

Neil Stewart
30 October 2005
planning@cairngorms.co.uk

The map on the first page of this report has been produced to aid in the statutory process of dealing with planning applications. The map is to help identify the site and its surroundings and to aid Planning Officers, Committee Members

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