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## CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

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

**Prepared by: ANDREW TAIT, PLANNING OFFICER (DEVELOPMENT CONTROL)**

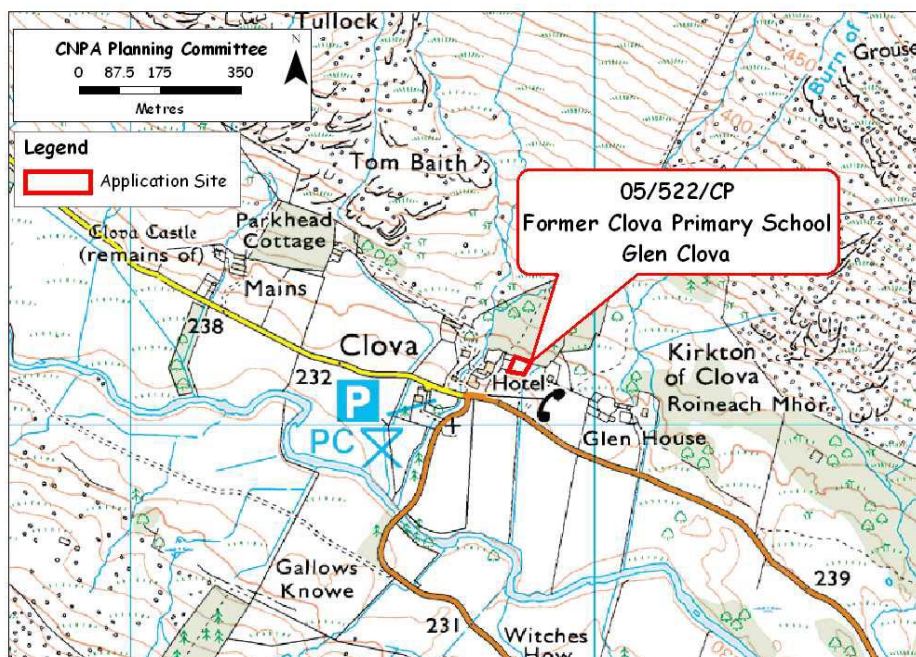
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**DEVELOPMENT PROPOSED: ERECTION OF 2 DWELLINGS FOR HOLIDAY COTTAGES, ADJACENT FORMER CLOVA PRIMARY SCHOOL, GLEN CLOVA, KIRRIEMUIR, ANGUS**

**REFERENCE: 05/522/CP**

**APPLICANT: CLOVA FARMS LTD**

**DATE CALLED-IN: 30 December 2005**

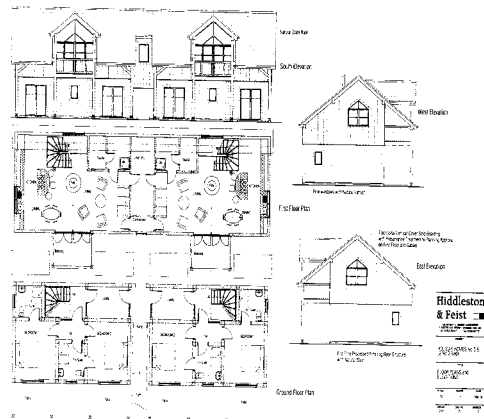


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**Fig 1 location plan**

## SITE DESCRIPTION AND PROPOSAL

1. This site is located to the east of the Glen Clova Hotel and immediately east of a cottage that was formerly Glen Clova Primary School. The site is enclosed on three sides by an existing dry stone wall. The site rises a little to the rear where it is fenced in from more open ground. There are a number of trees towards the back of the site; all of these except one are to be retained by this proposal.



**Figs 2 & 3 Site for holiday units within dry stone wall enclosure and proposed plans/elevations.**

2. The site is close to the car park for the Glen Clova Hotel and the applicant runs the hotel and associated facilities. The site has permission for two open market dwellings finished in render with slate roofs. This application seeks effectively to supersede that permission with a pair of two bedroom timber semis with natural slate roofs (see fig 3) that are of a different character to what was approved previously. The applicant always intended using the houses as high quality holiday accommodation for tourists but felt that the original design was of a type where the market had been saturated in this area. The applicant wished to provide a better quality type of development in terms of visitor expectations and has come up with the design shown in figure 3. This has been subject to a range of negotiated changes to reduce what was regarded as the bulky and over complicated nature of the original submission. The units are intended to help to diversify the range of business at the hotel and the applicants have confirmed that they are happy to accept a planning condition to ensure that they remain part of the business and used for commercial purposes only. Drainage arrangements are as per the previous approval for the site. Water supply is by an existing private system as was the case with the previous approval.

## DEVELOPMENT PLAN CONTEXT

### National Policy

3. **Para 14 of Scottish Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 (SPP15)** considers that tourism is of vital importance to the social, economic and environmental and cultural well being of rural Scotland. The guidance notes that Planning Authorities should support the development of the tourism and leisure industry with appropriate policies on the siting and design of new development.
4. **Para 15 of SPP15** deals with diversification and notes that many landowners including farmers, have already diversified some of their activity away from traditional farming. Many other businesses are also expanding into new areas. Further diversification of the rural economy should be encouraged and it is noted that there is enormous scope to exercise initiative and creativity.
5. **Para 29 of SPP15** notes that the intention that the general proactive thrust of the SPP should apply throughout Scotland. However, it should be recognised that Scotland's National Parks have been designated because of the importance of their natural and cultural qualities and refers to the aims of the National Parks.
6. **Planning Advice Note 73 on Rural Diversification** considers that diversification helps to make rural areas more sustainable and provides a range of examples of good practice in relation to rural diversification. The document provides definitions of both farm diversification and diversification of the rural economy.

### Local Policy

7. **Policy SC16 of the Angus Local Plan Rural Employment** considers that employment opportunities throughout rural Angus will be supported where they make a positive contribution to the rural economy and are of a scale and nature appropriate to the location, including proposals that assist the diversification of an existing rural business.
8. **Policy SC17: Tourism Development** notes that development proposals to provide new or improved tourist related facilities/attractions and accommodation will be permitted and encouraged where they improve the range and quality of visitor attractions and tourist facilities/and or extend the tourist season; have no unacceptable detrimental effect on the local landscape or rural environment are in-keeping with the scale and character of nearby buildings or surrounding countryside; are generally compatible with surrounding land uses; and accord with other relevant policies of the Local Plan.

9. The site is located within the defined settlement boundary for Clova as defined by the Angus Local Plan.

### National Park Draft Policies

10. The recently published **Draft Cairngorms National Park Plan: *Priorities for Action 2007-2012*** promotes 7 priorities for action one of which directly relates to making tourism and business sustainable. This priority recognises that the long term sustainability of the Park requires a vibrant tourism and business sector that underpins the economy, and at the same time contributes to conserving and enhancing the special qualities while not damaging them. Work within this priority area includes supporting strong business with high quality standards; managing the impacts of tourism and business; improving environmental performance; supporting entrepreneurship and business development.
11. For information the site is located within the settlement boundary defined by the **CNPA Consultation Draft Local Plan** for Clova. The policy text relating to the Angus Glens recognises that tourism is vital to the area, as a primary economic driver, and as such facilities and attractions should be developed/enhanced and maintained. The text also recognises that the general land based economy of the area is supplemented by tourism and recreation. The opportunity site around the Clova Hotel, while not zoned specifically for a commercial use has the potential for a wide range of (sensitively designed and sited) proposals. All parts of the Angus Glens are considered to be of the highest landscape and environmental quality. Any proposals should reflect this with the quality and care of their siting and design.

### CONSULTATIONS

12. **Scottish Water** has no objection to the proposal.
13. **Angus Council Roads Department** has no objection to the development but recommend that 2 parking spaces should be provided within each plot curtilage.
14. **Angus Council Roads and Transport** has responded in relation to potential flooding issues and has no objection.
15. **Angus Council Environmental Health** has no comments on the application.

## REPRESENTATIONS

16. No objections have been received in relation to this proposal. A supporting statement including sustainability statement is attached at the back of this report.

## APPRAISAL

17. The key issues here involve the principal of tourist accommodation at this particular site, the design of the building and the effects of the proposal on natural and cultural heritage.
18. As noted by the development plan context section of the report there is much support for economic development and expansion of tourism business within rural areas at both the national and local policy levels. In addition, it is important to note that this site lies within the Clova settlement boundary, has an extant planning permission for two dwellings and is very close to the applicant's existing tourism business at the Glen Clova Hotel. The existing consent involves two dwellings that could be sold on the open market. What is being proposed here is a pair of holiday accommodation units of a high quality in terms of their facilities. This is specifically aimed at diversifying the range of accommodation and business that the hotel currently provides. The applicant has pointed out that the existing full residential consent for the site is for a type of accommodation that there is much of in the area and that the market for this type of accommodation is somewhat saturated. The intention is that the units proposed here provide a level and quality of tourist accommodation not currently available in the area.
19. If the proposal is to be truly considered as rural diversification it would be important in this instance to ensure by condition that the units are used for their stated purpose and not sold separately from the business to ensure that they are truly a diversification of the existing business. In addition, the units have a level of separation from the hotel that could, in theory, allow them to be sensibly used as full-time dwellings; this is illustrated by the previous consent for two houses on the site. Consequently, a planning condition is proposed (see condition 2) to ensure that the accommodation remains a business diversification proposal to positively help with strengthening the tourism business base at the hotel. There is clear policy support at all levels for such an approach in principle.
20. In terms of siting the building would sit on a natural plot that already has an existing dry stone wall boundary. The site has previously been found to be suitable for two houses in the form of a pair of but and ben type bungalows. The building proposed here has been brought slightly forward of that previously approved to ensure that trees to the rear of the site can be retained to provide a wooded backdrop. The design of the building has been the subject of some debate and a series of

amendments have been made to simplify the front elevation in particular. I have some limited concern about allowing a timber building in this area which is characterised by small stone cottages and some with a render finish. However, there is another timber building at the hotel site used for bunkhouse type accommodation. If the building was to be for more permanent occupation something along the lines of what is already approved may, perhaps be more appropriate. However, in this instance I believe there is merit in the exception of a timber structure for holiday accommodation providing it truly retained as such which further emphasises the need for a condition to ensure this.

21. With regard to the design this building has been positioned forward of the footprint previously approved and this allows more of the trees and shrubs towards the back of the site to be retained. This is an improvement in terms of protecting natural heritage. Part of this relates to the relative prominence of the site (including the rest of the hotel complex) when viewed from across the Glen. The detailed colour finish of the timber will be important but the ability to retain trees and shrubs at the back of the building will help and provide a suitable wooded background for a timber building to be blended into, what will occur on the site will be a wooden structure set against a wooded backdrop.
22. As noted all general policy promotes the addition of tourist facilities in principle subject to being appropriately sited and designed, recent policy also places an emphasis on sustainability both in terms of locating facilities close to existing development and in terms of sustainable construction. This building would be set in a plot that has a stone wall on three sides which will be retained to provide a traditional boundary element for the new build. In terms of promoting the sustainable use of natural resources a sustainability statement has been submitted. One of the key points about this building is that it is very much orientated towards the south. The amount of glazing used on the front face of the house taken together with the concentration of all main rooms facing south results in a sustainable proposition in terms of minimising energy use. The building would be insulated to a level above the requirements of Building Regulations. The applicant is looking at the potential for small scale renewable energy proposals (possibly small scale hydro) for the whole site including potential future development.
23. Overall, this is viewed as a positive, un-contentious proposal that should help to strengthen the existing economic base at Clova contributing to the economic and social development and promotion of enjoyment and understanding aims without any detriment to natural or cultural heritage. The building proposed is a designed building for the site with higher than standard insulation levels rather than an off the shelf timber kit house. This contributes towards the promoting the sustainable use of natural resources aim.

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

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

24. In terms of natural heritage this proposal represents a limited improvement on that previously granted as it would result in the retention of trees at the back of the site. The architect intends the building to be wildlife friendly and a planning condition is proposed to ensure that a swift nest box is provided. In terms of cultural heritage the building is not of a traditional character but it does incorporate traditional elements in terms of the relatively narrow plan form, pitched roof and balcony dormers, the scheme also retains the dry stone wall enclosure. In terms of landscape the building should blend well with its surroundings as the wooded backdrop to the site will be retained.

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

25. More emphasis is placed upon sustainability in the design of this building given the significant glazed sections facing south. A sustainability statement has been submitted with the proposal which shows that where possible local labour and materials will be used. This is echoed by the Draft Park Plan priorities for action relating to making tourism business sustainable.

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

26. The scheme will provide visitor accommodation which will help in the enjoyment of the area by tourists staying at the facility. This may also promote the wider understanding of the special qualities of the area.

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

27. The proposal contributes strongly to this aim. The scheme helps diversify the business of the hotel and reinforces the business operation at the site. The development should contribute strongly to economic sustainability of the hotel and should also contribute towards employment opportunity in the area both during construction and in the course of operation. Condition 2 of the planning permission will ensure that the building continues to be used as holiday accommodation.

## RECOMMENDATION

28. That Members of the Committee support a recommendation to: **GRANT Full Planning Permission** for the erection of 2 dwellings for holiday accommodation, adjacent former Clova Primary School, Glen Clova
1. The development to which this permission relates must be begun within five years from the date of this permission.
  2. The proposed building shall only be used as holiday accommodation ancillary to and in connection with the business at the site and shall not be sold separately or be used by a tenant, lessee, owner or occupier as their only or principal dwellinghouse. No single period of occupation shall exceed two months. Occupation shall be restricted to use by persons requiring to stay in the area for recreational or vocational purposes.
  3. Exact details and specifications of all proposed external finishing materials (including roofing materials) shall be submitted for the further approval of the Cairngorms National Park Authority acting as planning authority before any work commences on site.
  4. A detailed landscaping scheme for the site shall be approved in writing by the Cairngorms National Park Authority acting as planning authority. The plan shall show all trees to be retained and those proposed to be planted and all existing and proposed means of enclosure. All planting within the approved details shall be carried out in the first planting season following the completion of the development. Any trees or plants that within a period of five years from commencement of the use die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased, shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of a similar size and species.
  5. Details of parking spaces (min 2 for each unit) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Cairngorms National Park Authority acting as planning authority. The spaces shall be finished and available prior to the first occupation of the units hereby approved.
  6. That no development shall commence on this site until trees marked for retention on the approved plans, have been protected around the extremities of the crowns of these trees to the satisfaction of the Cairngorms National Park Authority acting as planning authority, and in accordance with BS5837:2005, Trees in Relation to Construction.



7. Within 6 months of the first occupation of the development hereby approved a swift nest box shall be positioned on the building in a position to be agreed by the Cairngorms National Park Authority acting as planning authority. The nest box shall be retained thereafter unless otherwise agreed.

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**28 April 2006**

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