
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

Title: REPORT ON CALLED-IN PLANNING APPLICATION

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(PLANNING OFFICER,
DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT)**

**DEVELOPMENT PROPOSED:
(2013/0275/DET) CONVERSION OF THE HOTEL INTO 2 NO. FLATS AND DEMOLITION OF SMALL SINGLE STOREY LEAN-TO EXTENSION TO THE REAR AT STRATHSPEY HOTEL, HIGH STREET, GRANTOWN-ON-SPEY, HIGHLAND, PH26 3EL**

(2013/0282/LBC) DEMOLITION OF SMALL SINGLE STOREY LEAN-TO EXTENSION TO THE REAR OF THE HOTEL. INTERIOR WORKS TO CONVERT THE HOTEL INTO 2no. FLATS AT STRATHSPEY HOTEL, HIGH STREET, GRANTOWN-ON-SPEY, HIGHLAND, PH26 3EL

REFERENCE: 2013/0275/DET & 2013/0282/LBC

APPLICANT: RTD THISTLE LTD

DATE CALLED-IN: 26 AUGUST 2013

**RECOMMENDATION: 2013/0275/DET –
APPROVAL SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS
2013/0282/LBC –
APPROVAL SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS**



Grid reference: 303169E, 827654N

Fig. I - Location Plan

SITE DESCRIPTION AND PROPOSAL

1. This report concerns both the planning application and the listed building application for the same proposals. The application site is the existing Strathspey Hotel at the corner of High Street and Strathspey Road, which is a Category B Listed Building.
2. The application site also takes in part of the rear area covered by Application Nos 10/112/CP and 10/130/CP, which is in the ownership of the applicant.
3. The property is a Category B Listed Building. It is an early 19th century 2 storey and attic traditional stone building with timber sash and case windows and a slate roof. The property has been a hotel since at least 1868 (it is shown as Dunbar's Hotel on the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey Map).



Fig. 2 – Existing Building

Development Proposal

4. The proposals is to change the use of the building to two flats, one on the ground floor and one on the upper floor. The works involve the demolition of the existing rear single storey toilet extension, splitting the public bar area into two rooms and renewing some windows at the rear.

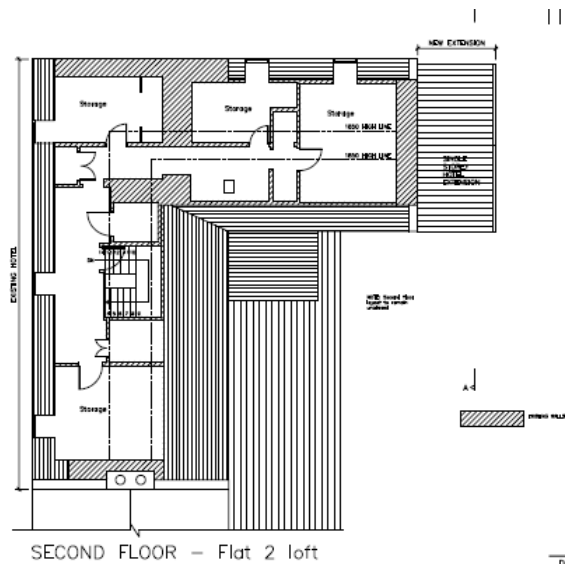
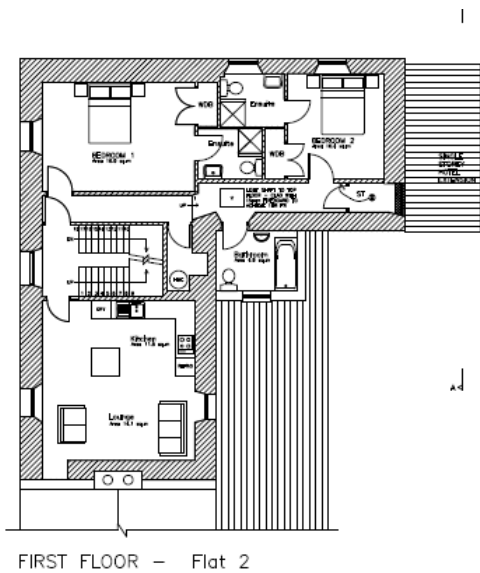
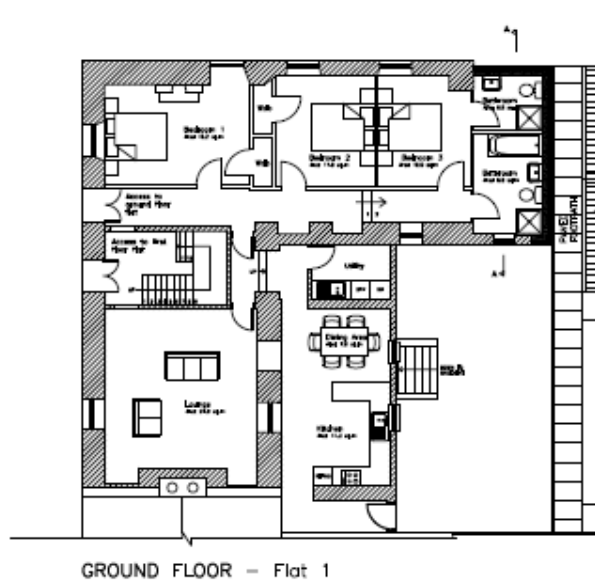


Fig. 3 – Proposed Flat Layouts

5. The application site also takes in part of the rear area covered by Application Nos 10/112/CP and 10/130/CP, which is in the ownership of the applicant. The drawing shows an adjustment to the overall layout, with a section of access road removed and the parking spaces and amenity space re-designed.

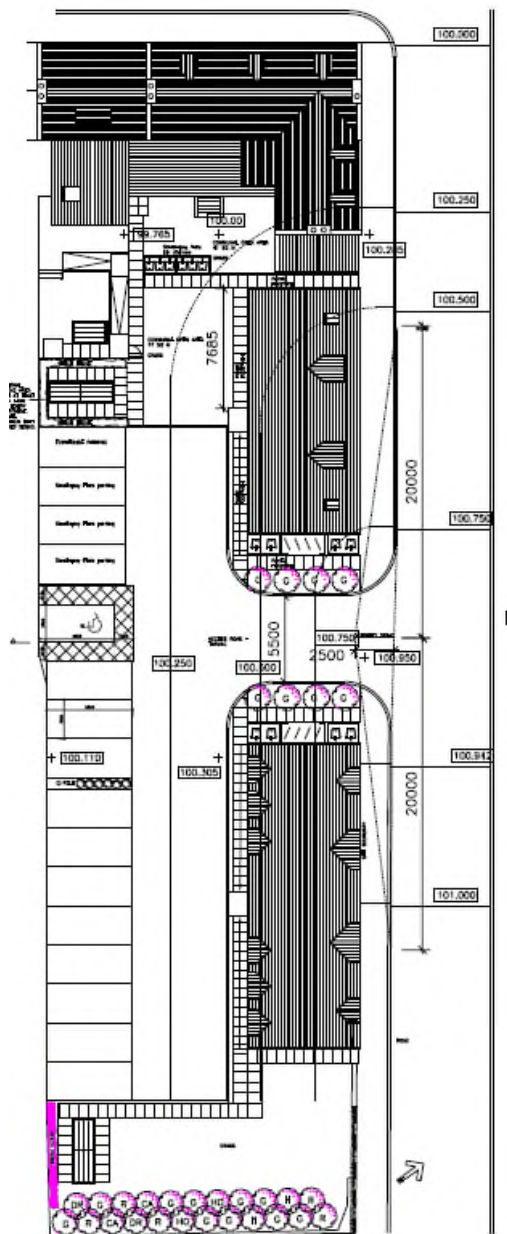


Fig. 4 – Proposed Site Layout

6. The application includes a Justification Statement referring to the history of the wider scheme, which was granted in 2008. The intention in 2008 had been to keep the Strathspey functioning as a small 3 room hotel with restaurant. It had been acquired in 2007, prior to which it had been disused for 5 years. It re-opened briefly then the economic downturn took effect. The applicant advises that the hotel/restaurant was put on the market but there have been no offers in the last 4 years. The hotel/restaurant business has not traded for the last 3 years.
7. The applicant advises that the flats are designed with no 'frills' to be affordable to people on modest incomes and first time buyers. The flats would be priced starting around £100k and available exclusively to people who live and work in the National Park for the first three months.

8. The supporting document refers to the fact that there will arguably be loss of business use of the hotel but the business has not been viable under different owners over the last 9 years. It also notes that Grantown has a number of similar empty properties and it is suggested that the loss of a three bedroomed hotel will not have a significant impact on the amount of available hotel accommodation within the town.

Site History

9. In 2008, planning permission and listed building consent were granted for the erection of 8 flats; conversion of part of the hotel into a house; and alterations and extensions to the hotel (Application Nos 08/147/CP and 08/148/CP).
10. In 2010, under Application No 10/112/CP, planning permission was granted for :-
 - (a) Re-development of existing hotel and erection of new extension;
 - (b) Conversion of part of existing hotel to dwelling house; and
 - (c) Erection of 8 flats(Phasing proposals to support variation of Condition 13 of 08/147/CP).
11. Planning permission was also granted, under Application No 10/130/CP, for the erection of a single storey extension from the existing building gable wall in order to retain hotel bar floor area lost by demolition of 1960's flat roof extension.
12. To date, part of the hotel has been converted into a house, the flat roof extension to the hotel has been demolished and the small single storey extension erected, and the foundations of the two new build blocks have been erected. The applicant advises that it is the intention to re-commence works on the site next year.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN CONTEXT

National policy

13. *Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) (February 2010)* is the statement of the Scottish Government's policy on nationally important land use planning matters. It encourages planning authorities to take a positive approach to development, recognising and responding to economic and financial conditions in considering proposals that would contribute to economic growth and has the basic aim 'to achieve the right development in the right place'.

14. As a replacement for a variety of previous planning policy documents the Scottish Planning Policy includes 'subject policies'. The key ones in relation to the proposed development are policies relating to economic development, town centres and retailing and the historic environment. Decisions on the location of new development should:
- promote regeneration and the re-use of previously developed land,
 - reduce the need to travel and prioritise sustainable travel and transport opportunities,
 - promote the development of mixed communities,
 - take account of the capacity of existing infrastructure,
 - promote rural development and regeneration, and
 - prevent further development which would be at risk from flooding or coastal erosion.
15. The SPP advises that authorities should respond to the diverse needs and locational requirements of different sectors and sizes of businesses and take a flexible approach to ensure that changing circumstances can be accommodated and new economic opportunities realised. Removing unnecessary planning barriers to business development and providing scope for expansion and growth is essential.

Strategic Policies

Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan (2012 - 2017)

16. The Partnership Plan 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 and development proposals would be expected accord with those :
- 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.

The CNP Partnership Plan can be viewed on the Cairngorms National Park Authority website at <http://cairngorms.co.uk/park-authority/about-us/publications/?publicationID=299>

Local Plan Policy

Cairngorms National Park Local Plan (2010)

17. 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>

18. The Local Plan contains a range of policies and new development requires to be assessed in relation to all policies contained in the Plan. 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.
19. 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.
20. *Policy 9 – Listed Buildings* states that there will be a presumption in favour of development that preserves a listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.
21. *Policy 10 – Conservation Areas* which requires development to preserve or enhance the character of the Conservation Area, with appropriate design standards sought.
22. *Policy 16: Design Standards for Development* sets out the design standards to be met with new development and is supported by Supplementary Planning Guidance in the form of the Sustainable Design Guide.
23. *Policy 25 – Business Development* which specifies that development proposals which would result in a loss of business use on the proposal site will be resisted unless it can be demonstrated that the retention of the business on the existing site is not viable.
24. Other policies of relevance include *Policy 18 – Developer Contributions and Policy 27 – Conversion and Reuse of Existing Traditional and Vernacular Buildings*.

Supplementary Planning Guidance

25. In addition to the adoption of the Cairngorms National Park Local Plan (2010) on 29th October 2010, a number of Supplementary Planning Guidance documents were also adopted, including:-

Sustainable Design Guide

26. This guidance encourages everyone involved in development in the Cairngorms National Park to adopt a more sustainable approach to design, and this should help to deliver individual buildings and larger scale developments which:

- are sensitively located, reflect existing development pattern and setting, and respect the natural and cultural landscape of the Park;
- reflect traditional materials and workmanship and take on board innovation, contemporary design and the emergence of modern methods of construction;
- maximise efficient use of natural resources;
- minimise negative environmental impacts; and
- provide the foundation stone for sustainable communities.

Affordable Housing

27. As set out in Policy 19 in the Cairngorms National Park Local Plan, all housing development in the National Park will be expected to make some contribution towards the provision of affordable housing. This may be through the provision of affordable houses as part of the housing development, it may be through the provision of affordable houses on a different site, or it may be through a cash contribution towards the provision of affordable housing.

CONSULTATIONS

28. **Grantown-on-Spey Community Council** – No response.
29. **Highland Council Forestry** – No comments on the proposals.
30. **Highland Council Conservation Officer** - No objection to the proposals. The building has lost the majority of its original feature through previous schemes of unsympathetic alteration and extension and its setting has been severely compromised by the flatted development approved and commenced within its historic curtilage. The retention or where lost reinstatement of traditional windows and doors to the street frontage would maintain the character and appearance of the streetscape in the conservation area. Additionally it should be conditioned that no cement mortars should be used for external repair of historic fabric.
31. **CNPA Head of Rural Development** concludes that the development has the potential to make a positive impact on the local economy. This is from benefits to the construction sector, the provision of increased and affordable housing and improved appearance of the building. It is acknowledged that the visitor market is shifting away from catered accommodation such as hotels. A condition is sought to ensure the housing has built-in flexibility for home-working.
32. A **Planning Gain** requirement for affordable housing has been identified in connection with this application.

REPRESENTATIONS

33. No representations have been received.

APPRAISAL

34. The planning legislation requires that applications are determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
35. It is considered that the applicant has demonstrated that the retention of the hotel business is not viable at this address. This has been supported by the CNPA Head of Rural Development.
36. The issue is then whether the use of the premises as two flats is acceptable both in principle and in terms of the impact on the listed building. The proposals to re-configure the space at the rear enable adequate amenity space and parking facilities to be provided for both the two new flats and the adjoining new build proposal.
37. It is recommended that the works to the listed building are addressed by condition as per the advice from Highland Council.

Conclusion

38. It is considered that the works are in compliance with the Development Plan policies and that there are no material considerations which would indicate that permission should not be granted.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE AIMS OF THE NATIONAL PARK

Conserve and Enhance the Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Area

39. The proposals involve the upgrading and conversion of a listed building that has been vacant for some time and will therefore help conserve and enhance the cultural heritage of the Park.

Promote Sustainable Use of Natural Resources

40. The proposals involve the retention and conversion of an existing building and hence will create new accommodation with minimum use of natural resources.

Promote Understanding and Enjoyment of the Area

41. The retention and upgrading of this listed building will help improve the appearance of the High Street and thereby contribute to the enjoyment of the area.

Promote Sustainable Economic and Social Development of the Area

42. The provision of 'no frills' housing, available in the first instance to those who live and work locally, will contribute to the economic and social development of the area.

RECOMMENDATION

That Members of the Committee support a recommendation to GRANT Planning Permission in respect of Application No 2013/0275/DET subject to the following:-

- a) **The completion of a Section 75 Planning Obligation to secure the payment of developer contributions towards affordable housing OR the payment of the required developer contributions in advance of the release of the decision notice;**

AND

- b) **Subject to the following conditions:**

1. The development of the site and the provision of roads, footpaths, on site car parking, open space and landscaping shall be undertaken in accordance with drawing no. 2013-05-1590-01A (dwg. title Site Layout), and shall also comply with the following requirements –
- (i) the internal road and parking layout shall be generally in accordance with the submitted details. The main access road shall be 5.5 metres wide, such that opposing vehicles can readily pass one another;
 - (ii) construction of the internal road and parking area shall comply with the requirements for a minor access road as detailed in Highland Council's Road Guidelines for New Developments;
 - (iii) the car parking shall be provided and available for use prior to the occupation of the flats.

Reason: In the interests of traffic safety and general amenity and to ensure that all vehicles may enter and leave the site safely at all times.

2. All car parking areas, driveways and other hard standing areas shall have a durable, dust free, porous surface.

Reason: In the interests of general amenity.

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

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

4. Prior to the commencement of development, a detailed landscaping plan shall be submitted for the agreement of the Cairngorms National Park Authority, acting as Planning Authority. The landscaping plan shall include comprehensive details of all species (which should be of indigenous origin), planting location and numbers to be planted. All new landscaping shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details. The landscaping of all communal areas within the proposed development shall be completed within one year of the commencement of works. Any trees or shrubs that die or become seriously damaged or diseased within a period of five years from the time of planting shall be replaced with others of a similar size and species, suited to the climate of the area, within the next planting season.

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

5. Prior to the commencement of development detailed proposals for the provision a safe pedestrian access along the Spey Avenue frontage of the site for the duration of construction works shall be submitted for the written agreement of the Cairngorms National Park Authority acting as Planning Authority and the agreed proposals shall thereafter be implemented in full.

Reason: In the interests of public safety and in order to ensure that pedestrian movement in the area is not hindered.

6. The houses shall have provision for built in flexibility for home working and infrastructure for high speed broadband connection with details submitted to and approved by the Cairngorms National Park Authority before work starts on site.

Reason: To ensure that new housing is sustainable in accordance with Partnership Plan policies.

7. The normal construction working hours within the site shall be Monday – Friday between 0700hours and 1800hours and on Saturdays between 0800hours and 1300hours, with no work being carried out on public holidays or Sundays, in order to provide guaranteed periods of quiet to neighbouring residents.

Reason: To safeguard the amenity of local residents.

And

Grant Listed Building Consent in respect of Application No 2013/0282/LBC subject to the following conditions:-

1. All existing traditional windows and doors shall be retained and repaired/refurbished where necessary. Where it has been proved that an existing window or door is beyond repair and in any instance where it is proposed to replace a non-traditional window or door, the replacement shall match the traditional window or door in terms of materials, design, proportion and method of opening, to the satisfaction of the Cairngorms National Park Authority acting as Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of safeguarding the character and appearance of the listed building.

2. All external repairs shall match the original materials and be carried out using traditional methods. No cement mortars shall be used for external repair of the historic fabric.

Reason: In the interests of safeguarding the character and appearance of the listed building.

Advice Note:

This application requires to be referred to Historic Scotland, as it concerns a Category B Listed Building.

Fiona Murphy

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Date 25 November 2013

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 and the Public in the determination of the proposal. Maps shown in the Planning Committee Report can only be used for the purposes of the Planning Committee. Any other use risks infringing Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Maps produced within this Planning Committee Report can only be reproduced with the express permission of the Cairngorms National Park Authority and other Copyright holders. This permission must be granted in advance.