
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

Title: REPORT ON CALLED-IN PLANNING APPLICATION

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DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT)**

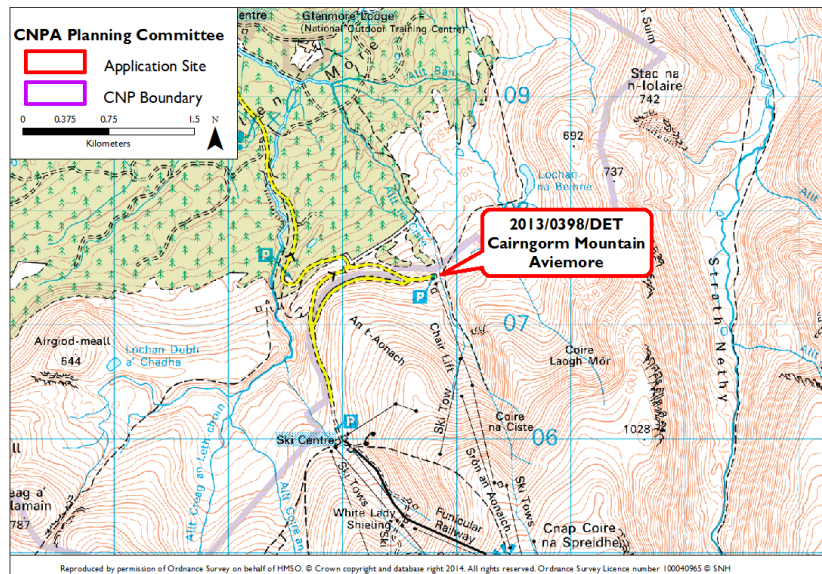
DEVELOPMENT PROPOSED: RECONFIGURATION OF EXISTING BUILDING TO STRIP BACK TO TRANSFORMER ENCLOSURE ONLY. RECLADDING AND RE-ROOFING OF ENCLOSURE. AT CAIRNGORM MOUNTAIN, GLENMORE, AVIEMORE, PH22 1RB

REFERENCE: 2013/0398/DET

APPLICANT: HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS ENTERPRISE

DATE CALLED-IN: 16 December 2013

RECOMMENDATION: APPROVAL SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS



Grid reference: 299006/E 805946/N

Fig. I - Location Plan

SITE DESCRIPTION AND PROPOSAL

- 1 The application site lies to the south-east of the Coire na Ciste Car Park on Cairngorm Mountain. It comprises an existing derelict building that formerly contained a restaurant, ticket office, transformer and other related facilities associated with the ski tows that used to operate in this area.

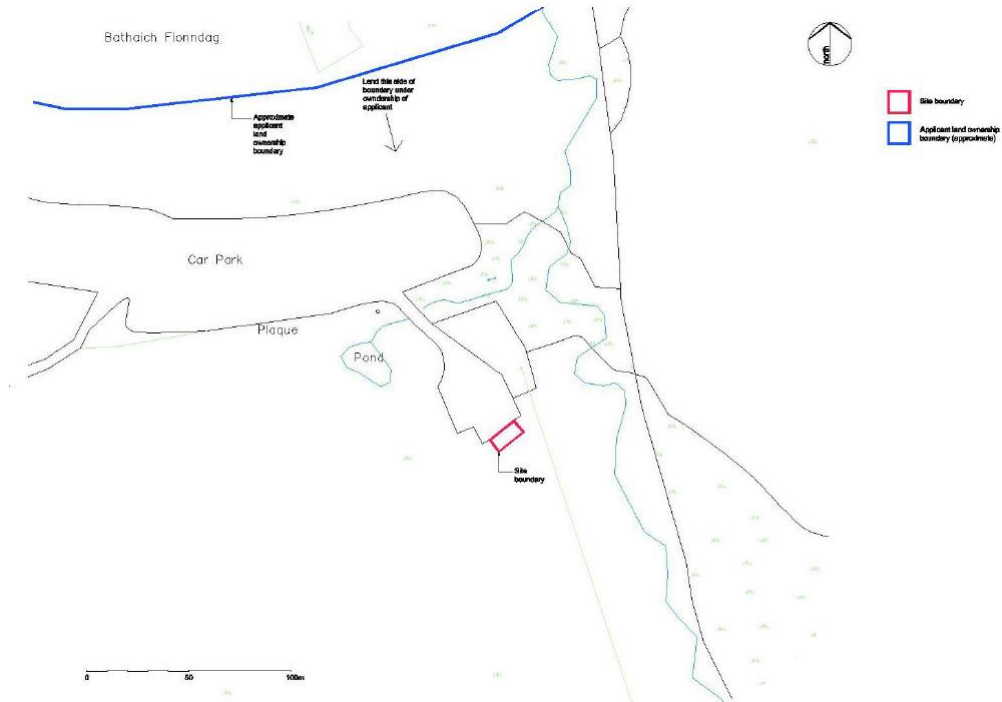


Fig 2 Location of Site

Development Proposal

- 2 The proposal is to demolish the majority of the building but to retain the transformer, switchgear and workshop within a much smaller replacement building. This will take the form of a simple rectangular building embedded into the hillside, with wet dash render walls and a pitched roof finished in profiled metal sheeting. The opening to the north will be in-filled with steel doors. The retention of the transformer is required because it is part of the ring main that supplies the whole Cairngorm Mountain development.



Photo 1 Site as Existing

- 3 The scheme includes proposals to reinstate the ground following demolition of the main building.

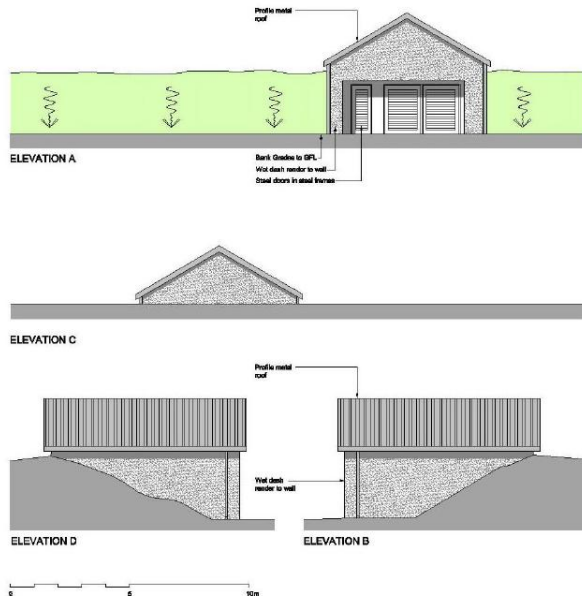


Fig 3 Proposed Building

Site History

- 4 The site lies within the National Scenic Area but does not have any other designations. The Coire na Ciste area was developed for ski-ing in the 1970s, when it was served by two chairlifts and two surface lifts. However, these were decommissioned in 2005.
- 5 Members will be aware that the area close to the building is being used for the storage of the materials from these decommissioned facilities, which is somewhat unsightly. This storage lies outwith the red line of the planning application but within the ownership of the applicant. It is understood that certain items are being removed and stored elsewhere by Cairngorm

Mountain Limited and that, with the exception of the chairs from the chairlift, the remaining items will be disposed of by the contractor in conjunction with the development proposals which form the subject of this planning application.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN CONTEXT

National policy

- 6 *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'.
- 7 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 landscape and natural heritage and economic development.
- 8 Under Landscape and Natural Heritage, the SPP notes that Scotland's landscape and natural heritage are internationally renowned and important, underpinning significant industries such as the food, drink and tourism industries, and are a key component of the high environmental quality which makes Scotland an attractive place in which to live, do business and invest. Improving the natural environment and the sustainable use and enjoyment of it is one of the Government's national outcomes.
- 9 The SPP advises, in terms of economic development, 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)

- 10 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)

- 11 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>
- 12 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.
- 13 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.
- 14 *Policy 6 – Landscape* – This policy states that there will be a presumption against any development that does not complement and enhance the landscape character of the Cairngorms National Park, and in particular the setting of the proposed development.
- 15 *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.
- 16 *Policy 23 – Tourism-Related Development* supports development which has a beneficial impact on the local economy through enhancement of the range and quality of tourism attractions and related infrastructure including accommodation, provided it will not have an adverse impact on the landscape, biodiversity or the culture and traditions of the National Park which outweigh that beneficial impact.

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- 17 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

- 18 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

CONSULTATIONS

- 19 **Aviemore and Vicinity Community Council** – No comments.
- 20 **CNPA Visitor Services** - The importance of the CairnGorm Mountain is recognised in the current National Park Partnership Plan. Recent studies indicate that some 450,000 people, mainly visitors, travel up the mountain road each year. The 'mothballed' infrastructure in the Coire na Ciste car park is unsightly and inappropriate in the montane location within a National Park. The proposal to demolish the buildings to the minimum required will improve the appearance of the site particularly if this is accompanied by the removal of other surplus materials from around the site.

REPRESENTATIONS

- 21 None.

APPRAISAL

- 22 The existing derelict building is a particularly unattractive feature in this area. In effect, its replacement with a significantly smaller, simpler building, combined with the restoration of the remainder of the site that the building stood on, will serve to greatly improve the overall appearance of the site.
- 23 The building design is a simple, straightforward structure, part-buried into the hillside, which will relate more appropriately to the landscape and surroundings.
- 24 Whilst this will solve the problem of the derelict building, there will still remain the issue of unsightly external storage of chairs from the redundant chair lift. As this is within the control of the applicant and there appears to be no prospect of the lift being reinstated in the foreseeable future, it is recommended that a condition is attached to any planning permission to secure the complete clearance of the area surrounding the building.

Conclusion

- 25 The proposed development meets with the requirements of the Development Plan policies and there are no material considerations affecting it.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE AIMS OF THE NATIONAL PARK

Conserve and Enhance the Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Area

- 26 The proposal will secure the removal of an unattractive derelict building and its replacement with a much smaller building, designed to be more in keeping with the surrounding area.

Promote Sustainable Use of Natural Resources

- 27 The proposal will have no significant impact on this aim.

Promote Understanding and Enjoyment of the Area

- 28 The proposal will secure the removal of an unattractive derelict building and its replacement with a much smaller building, making the area more attractive to visitors.

Promote Sustainable Economic and Social Development of the Area

- 29 The retention of the transformer is essential to the existing Cairngorm Mountain development and any future developments.

RECOMMENDATION

That Members of the Committee support a recommendation to grant planning permission subject to the following conditions:-

- 1 No development shall commence until details of the materials for the roof, walls and doors have been approved by the Cairngorms National Park Authority acting as planning authority.

Reason: To ensure that the building materials are appropriate in this sensitive location, in the interests of visual amenity.

- 2 The ground reinstatement works shall be carried out within six months of the completion of the building in accordance with the details in the letter dated 3 February 2014.

Reason: To ensure that the site is returned to an appropriate condition in this sensitive location, in the interests of visual amenity.

- 3 Prior to the completion of the development, the applicant shall ensure that all external storage of materials is permanently ceased.

Reason: To ensure that the site is returned to an appropriate condition in this sensitive location, in the interests of visual amenity.

Informative

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 21 February 2014

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.