
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

Title: REPORT ON CALLED-IN PLANNING APPLICATION

Prepared by: NEIL STEWART, PLANNING OFFICER
(DEVELOPMENT CONTROL)

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSED: ALTERATIONS TO AND EXTENSION OF
STEADING, ROAD END, BALLIEWARD,
GRANTOWN-ON-SPEY

REFERENCE: 04/087/CP

APPLICANT: MR. & MRS. C. SWAN, WESTER
INVERUGLAS, INSCH, BY KINGUSSIE

DATE CALLED-IN: 27 FEBRUARY 2004



Fig. 1 - Location Plan

SITE DESCRIPTION AND PROPOSAL

1. **The Committee will recall that this application was reported to the Planning Committee held in Aviemore on 8 April 2004. The Committee decided to defer the determination of the application, in order to allow for further discussion and negotiation with the applicants and their agents on the matter of the design of the proposal. This report supplements the previous report by including the outcome of these discussions.**
2. Ballieward Steading is a disused former agricultural building located approximately 2km to the north of Grantown-on-Spey on the west side of the A939 public road to Nairn (see Fig. 1.). The building sits in an open position at a level slightly higher than that of the road. Open agricultural land rises up to the west but drops down towards the south affording views in this direction towards the Cairngorms Mountains. Woodland exists on the north east boundary, across a minor road. The building itself is rectangular in configuration with a pitched roof. It is constructed with stone although the north gable is partially formed in timber. The roof is finished in corrugated sheeting (see Figs. 2. and 3.).



Fig. 2 - View towards site from the North Fig. 3 - Existing building (North gable)

3. An application to change the use of the building to a dwellinghouse was approved by Highland Council in December 2002. This application did not provide information on any alterations and extensions but the approval imposed a condition that required the submission of an application indicating these details. The result is this application.
4. The submissions show the conversion of the existing building with an extension to the rear to accommodate a 4/5 bed roomed house. The rear extension runs parallel with the existing building and is attached by a glazed link corridor. The extension has accommodation on two floors (upper floor within the roofspace) but the existing building is converted on the ground floor only. A single garage is proposed on the north gable of the extension and a detached pitched roof garage with log store is proposed within the grounds on the north side. Access is to be taken from the minor road at the northmost corner of the site and an existing access located close to the junction with the A939 is to be removed. The extension is to be finished in slate, timber

cladding and a painted Scots wet dash render. The roof of the existing building is to be removed and replaced with a new slate roof.

5. **Following discussions with the applicants and their agents, some amendments have been submitted. These include two main changes. The first is a lowering of ground levels to the rear of the existing wing which has resulted in a lowering of the overall height of the new wing in comparison to the existing building. The new wing will now be 600mm higher than the original. Previously it was 1 metre higher. The other change is that the chimney breast on the south elevation will now be constructed in stone to match that of the existing building. Previously it was to be finished with the wet dash render.**

DEVELOPMENT PLAN CONTEXT

6. Highland Structure Plan Policy G2 (Design for Sustainability) states that proposed developments will be assessed on the extent to which they, amongst other things, make use of brownfield sites, existing buildings and recycled materials, impact on resources including habitats, species, landscape, scenery and cultural heritage, and demonstrate sensitive siting and high quality design in keeping with local character and the historic and natural environment. Policy H3 only precludes the conversion of non-traditional buildings in the countryside.
7. Badenoch and Strathspey Local Plan Policy 2.2.1(b) (Agricultural Diversification) states that the conversion of redundant buildings for small scale business and residential purposes will be supported, subject to adequate access and compatibility with neighbouring uses and amenity.

CONSULTATIONS

8. The technical issues of drainage, access, water supply and archaeology were addressed, in the main, at the time of the original change of use application. However, a reconsultation exercise has been carried out.
9. Highland Council's Area Roads Manager has advised that the conditions recommended at the time of the previous application be imposed again if approval is given. These required the closing of the existing access near to the junction with the A939 and a new access being formed off the minor road at least 50m from the A939. The submission indicates this. Other conditions relate to visibility splays, surfacing, and the provision of a service bay.
10. Highland Council's Environmental Health Officer initially stated that the original geodivining survey for the private water supply indicated that the likelihood of success of a borehole was in the region of 75%. This did not confirm that the supply would have been adequate for the development. The applicants have, however, dug a 50m borehole and it is stated that it produced a flow of water of approximately 1000/1500 gallons of water per hour. The

test was carried out by a suitably qualified person. The Environmental Health Officer has stated that this is adequate.

11. Highland Council's Archaeology Service has stated that the building is of historic interest and of value to future research. It was depicted on the first edition Ordnance Survey map of c.1870. They state that works should not be carried out without a visual record first being made. A condition requiring a photographic record of the building and its immediate setting should be imposed. A similar condition was imposed on the previous permission and the applicants agent has confirmed that they are happy to provide the required information.
12. At the time of the previous application, Highland Council's Building Control Service inspected several trial pits for foul drainage and it was found that the ground was unsuitable for an underground soakaway. An above ground mound soakaway system of drainage was therefore agreed. SEPA have been consulted on this method of drainage and have stated that they have no objection providing it complies with the Building Regulations, in particular in relation to distances from watercourses. In addition, they have a preference for there being secondary treatment of effluent prior to the discharge to the mound soakaway. The applicant's agent has confirmed that there are no watercourses in close proximity to the site and that the position of the mound soakaway has been chosen to avoid any cross contamination. **A secondary means of treatment will be provided and a condition can be imposed to this effect.**

REPRESENTATIONS

13. No representations have been received.
14. **The applicant's agent, Mr. Leslie Hunter (Chartered Architect), has submitted a formal request to address the Committee.**

APPRAISAL

15. As detailed above the technical issues of drainage, access, water supply and archaeology have been addressed. The previous application has established the principle of allowing this building to be converted and extended to form a house. Planning policy in the Structure Plan and the Local Plan permit the re-use of traditional buildings in the countryside. The determination of this proposal therefore hinges on the design of the proposals and their appropriateness to the character of the existing building and its surroundings.
16. At the time of the call-in, in relation to the need to conserve and enhance the cultural heritage of the area, the Committee were concerned about the size of the extension and the impact that this would have on the character of this rural building. The building certainly has a simple form and character, typical of many in rural areas throughout the National Park. There are few apertures,

except for a large double cart door in the north gable. It is clearly a functional building. By setting back the extension to the rear and using a glazed link between the two parts, the integrity, form, character and scale of the original is retained. **Prior to reporting the application to the Committee in Aviemore, amendments to the proposal were suggested in order to try and reduce the extent of the additions and a revised scheme was submitted. In this revised proposal, to further emphasise the character and form of the original, all additions to this part of the house were removed and there was a reduction in the size and number of new openings. Also timber cladding and a glazed opening with external timber storm doors were employed on the north gable to reflect the character of what exists at present.**

17. **The footprint size of the new wing to the rear remains marginally larger than that of the existing building. The previous scheme had the new wing at a height of 1m higher than the original. This was mainly due to the rising ground levels to the rear. However, the further revisions now indicate that the external ground and internal floor levels are to be reduced. This means that the new wing is now only 600mm higher than the existing wing. The overall form, massing and scale of the new build wing remains similar to the original and due to the fall in ground levels to the south and east, and the fact that it is set back from the original, the extension will not appear out of scale or overbearing when viewed from the public road approaches. With regard to the finishing materials, previously the Committee raised the concern that the new wing was not being finished in stone to match the existing. This was discussed with the applicant's agent and the cost of this was found to be prohibitive. However, the applicant has agreed to use stone on the proposed chimney breast on the south gable. This is the elevation which is most prominent when viewing the development from the public road. Overall, the materials proposed are traditional to the area and complement those on the original steading. The wet harl will be coloured to match the original pointing on the stonework of the existing building. The timber cladding proposed ties in with the timber north gable of the existing building.**
18. **The provision of the proposed extension in a wing which would extend at right angles to form an "L" shaped building was suggested by the Committee as an alternative solution. This was raised with the applicant's agent. However, it was stated that this would significantly alter the character of the existing building by introducing a new building form and layout. It would also mean the massing of the development would be greater because of the need to step this new wing up the slope. The benefit of the proposed layout is that the new wing follows the line of the existing contours. I concur with this view. It was also suggested by the Committee that the proposed glazed link and the arrangement of buildings on site could result in two houses being formed. This is certainly not what is proposed but a condition has been added to ensure the retention of the glazed link at all times. Amendments have also been made to the conditions relating to drainage and boundary enclosures to reflect the Committee's previous concerns. For these reasons, although**

the site is fairly prominent in the landscape, I continue to submit that the proposal will not adversely effect the character of the existing building or its surroundings. The further amendments made will further improve the quality and appropriateness of the development and the proposal will continue to allow for the retention and appropriate re-use of this rural building.

19. To conclude, the proposal complies with planning policy in terms of the Highland Council Structure and Local Plans. Unlike in other Council areas of the National Park, these policies do not restrict the amount of extension permitted when carrying out rural building conversions. The National Park Authority will be developing its own policies on this type of development in due course and it may be that restrictions will evolve. However, the determination of this application is reliant on the extant Council policies and the wider aims of the National Park. As stated below, it is felt that the development does not create any overriding negative implications for the aims of the Park. **As such, the recommendation remains one of approval.**

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE AIMS OF THE NATIONAL PARK

Conserve and Enhance the Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Area

20. The site is not located in a sensitive area in terms of nature conservation. Although the site is fairly prominent in the immediate landscape, the building already exists and the scale and design of the extension will not provide any significant landscape or visual impacts which would impinge on the character of the countryside. **The applicant's agent has also stated that some native tree planting and landscaping will be carried out within the site to provide a setting and there is a condition requiring details to be submitted for further approval.** In relation to cultural heritage, the proposals are allowing the retention and re-use of this traditional rural building and it is found that the development proposals will not adversely affect the character of this former steading. There are no negative implications in terms of natural or cultural heritage.

Promote Sustainable Use of Natural Resources

21. There are no discernible effects, positive or negative, in terms of this aim.

Promote Understanding and Enjoyment of the Area

22. There are no discernible effects, positive or negative, in terms of this aim.

Promote Sustainable Economic and Social Development of the Area

23. The development is of a small scale and therefore there are no discernible effects, positive or negative, in terms of this aim.

RECOMMENDATION

That Members of the Committee support a recommendation to:

Grant Full Planning Permission, subject to the following conditions:-

- i. The development to which this permission relates must be begun within five years from the date of this permission.
- ii. That notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Scotland) Order 1992, no house extension shall be formed, and no greenhouse, shed or garage erected without the prior written consent of the Planning Authority.
- iii. The development shall be landscaped and maintained in accordance with a scheme which shall be submitted to and approved by the Planning Authority before development commences. The scheme shall indicate the siting, numbers, species and heights (at time of planting) of all trees and hedges to be planted and to the extent of any areas of earthmounding, and shall ensure:-
 - a. Completion of the scheme during the planting season next following the completion of the development, or such other date as may be agreed in writing with the Planning Authority.
 - b. The maintenance of the landscaped areas in perpetuity. Any trees removed, or which in the opinion of the Planning Authority, are dying, being severely damaged or becoming seriously diseased within three years of planting, shall be replaced by trees of similar size and species to those originally required to be planted.
- iv. **The boundaries, if marked, may only be marked by a simple post and wire fence and/or drystone dyking.**
- v. Prior to the commencement of the wall rendering works, a sample panel, approximately 1 metre square, of the wet harling and its paint colour shall be prepared on site for the inspection and further written approval of the Planning Authority.
- vi. Prior to the commencement of the works to stain the external timber boarding, exact details of the stain colour shall be provided for the further written approval of the Planning Authority.
- vii. The oil tank shall be screened by a dark stained timber fence and/or shrub and tree planting, to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority.
- viii. Prior to the commencement of the development, a combined access and service bay shall be formed at a point at least 50 metres north west of the A939 public road. The access drive shall meet the public road at an angle between 75 and 105 degrees. Construction for at least the first 6 metres

from the nearside of the public road shall consist of a minimum of 40 millimetres thick close graded wearing course on 60 millimetres dense base course on a minimum thickness of 350 millimetres type 1 sub-base all on a sound foundation. Thereafter the access road shall be at least 3 metres wide and construction shall consist of 350 millimetres thick type 1 sub-base all on a sound foundation. The existing access shall be permanently closed off and the roadside verge reinstated to its natural condition.

- ix. Prior to the commencement of the development, there shall be formed, and thereafter maintained in perpetuity, visibility splays on both sides of the access to the public road measuring 3 metres by 90 metres in a north westerly direction and 3 metres by the distance to the junction with the A939 public road to the south east. Within the visibility splay areas so defined there shall be no obstruction to visibility exceeding 1 metre in height as measured from the adjacent carriageway level.
- x. Any gates that are provided shall be set back at least 6 metres from the edge of the public road and shall open into the property only; any fencing along the roadside boundary of the plot shall be set back at least 2 metres from the nearside carriageway edge and 1 metre from the edge of the service bay.
- xi. Prior to the commencement of development, a photographic record shall be made of the remains of the existing building and/or other features affected by the development, in accordance with the attached specification, and shall thereafter be submitted to the Planning Authority. No site clearance work shall take place until confirmation in writing has been received from the Planning Authority, following consultation with the Highland Council's Archaeology Service, that the record made has been lodged and is satisfactory.
- xii. **The development hereby approved shall not be occupied until such time as the proposed foul water drainage system, which shall include a means of secondary treatment prior to the discharge to the mound soakaway, has been provided to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority, in consultation with the Highland Council Building Control Authority and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency.**
- xiii. **The glazed link, as highlighted on the approved floor plan drawing no.539-02, shall be constructed and retained as an integral part of the dwellinghouse, and it shall not be removed, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Planning Authority.**

Neil Stewart
3 May 2004

planning@cairngorms.co.uk

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