
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

Title: REPORT ON CALLED-IN PLANNING APPLICATION

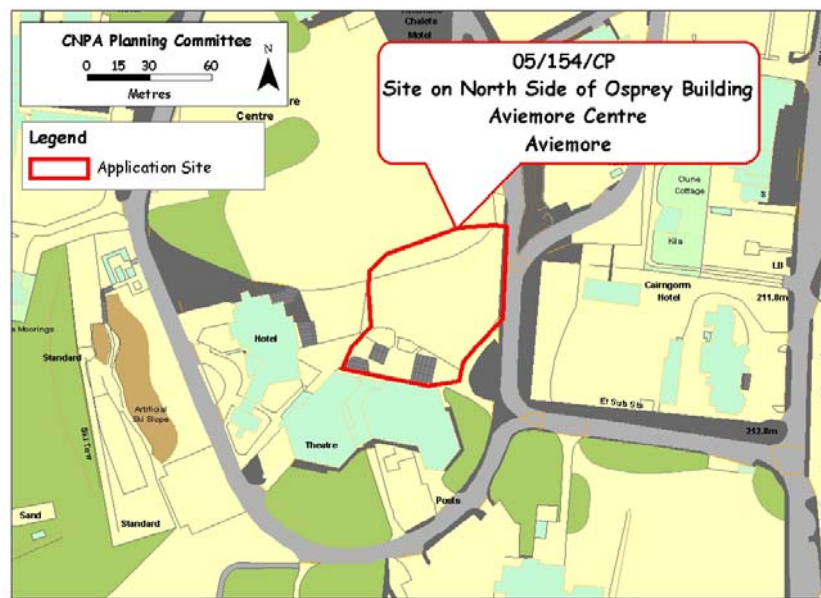
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(DEVELOPMENT CONTROL)

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSED: DISPLAY OF ILLUMINATED ADVERTISEMENTS, NEW RETAIL PAVILION, AVIEMORE HIGHLAND RESORT, AVIEMORE

REFERENCE: 05/0154/CP

APPLICANT: AVIEMORE HIGHLAND RESORT, C/O MACDONALD HOTELS, WHITESIDE HOUSE, BATHGATE.

DATE CALLED-IN: 8 APRIL 2005



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Fig. 1 Location Plan

SITE DESCRIPTION AND PROPOSAL

1. This site is the new retail pavilion, which has recently been constructed on the north side of the Osprey Building at the Aviemore Highland Resort. The building has a shallow pitch contemporary roof with a mixture of glazing and render walls to the elevations. The east side of the building fronts onto a narrow landscaped area and then the loop road the west elevation faces the main car parking area.



Fig. 2 Eastern entrance signs, the 3 lower level panel signs are the subject of this application.

2. The proposal is for the display of illuminated panels measuring 3 metres long by 1.5 metres wide on the render sections of the building, there are a total of 27 panels. The panels would be backlit, include lettering and represent a range of photographic images to reflect the seasons. The proposal also includes smaller illuminated signs within the building hung behind sections of glazing. Two additional signs one horizontal and one vertical would be placed at the eastern pedestrian entrance to the building. At the time of writing the majority of the advertisement panels have been fixed to the building, there are still 10 to add to the eastern elevation.

3. Concerns had been raised with the applicant regarding the sheer number of panels on the eastern elevation of the building. As a result of this, the agent has sent in revised drawings reducing the number of panels by 10. Concern was raised regarding a large temporary sign in front of the eastern entrance to the pavilion. It is understood that Highland Council were seeking the removal of this sign and it has been recently taken down.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN CONTEXT

4. The Highland Structure Plan has no direct policies relating to advertisements.
5. **Section 2.2.20 of the Badenoch and Strathspey Local Plan** alludes to the fact that a degree of advertising is essential to many businesses, but notes that safeguards are required in the interests of amenity and traffic safety.
6. There are supplementary advertisement design guidelines for Aviemore alone (**Aviemore Advertisement Sign Guidelines January 1996**) which seek to promote overall improvements in the appearance of the village. The guidance considers that the majority of business premises will require a single sign panel as their principal advertising sign, the guidance goes on to recognise that in exceptional circumstances where a single principal sign would not effectively advertise the business, an additional principle sign may be appropriate. The guidance goes on to state that an additional principal sign may be acceptable where a single principal sign is unlikely to be seen by a majority of potential customers, where the premises are large and also where separate businesses operate. Detailed guidance is provided on the size and number of signs expected within the commercial zone of Aviemore which the site is located in.
7. The guidance considers that building mounted signs should be closely tailored to fit the features of the building to which they are attached.
8. In terms of illumination the guidance considers light should be directed onto the face of the sign by means of a spot or floodlight fittings. The guidance considers that internally illuminated signage should not normally be used.

CONSULTATIONS

9. **Highland Council Planners** object to the proposal considering the nature and extent of the advertisements to be wholly inappropriate for a highland village setting and that the signage will harm amenity. There is no objection to the internal illuminated signs behind the glazing panels or the free standing pillar sign. However, there is concern that

the positions of the signs emphasise the car park entrance to the building rather than the eastern approach from the village.

10. The **Area Roads Manager** has been consulted and has no comment on the proposal.

REPRESENTATIONS

11. **Aviemore Community Council** consider that the illuminated signs designed to cover all the windows of the retail unit will cheapen this high quality building and the up-market retail business. The Council also consider that the signs do not conform to the Aviemore Advertisement Guidelines adopted by the Council in 1996. The signs are not considered to comply with the aims of the Community Council or the National Park and will cheapen the MacDonald image and devalue the whole of the Aviemore Complex. The Community Council also think that these signs will destroy the beauty of the night sky around Craigellachie and that light pollution will become an issue.
12. An e-mail from the agent has been attached at the back of the report which sets down the reasons why the signs have been placed prior to consent being granted.

APPRAISAL

13. The key issue with this signage simply relates to its overall visual impact upon general amenity and the effects of the proposal upon the character of Aviemore. The supplementary guidance outlined in the development plan policy section of the report originates from 1996 and gives detailed advice on the number and scale of advertisements on any particular building.
14. The scale of the advertisements proposed here cannot be considered to accord with the nature, scale and number of signs as set out in the 1996 design guidance. Indeed, this is reflected in the objection from Highland Council Planning Officers.
15. These concerns are recognised and the number of panels proposed has been reduced. However, the scale of the proposals still easily exceed the general scale and numbers of signs expected by the design guidance which is also resistant to internally illuminated advertising signage in general.
16. Despite the above weight of concern my recommendation is for approval of the scheme, this is based upon a number of material factors. Firstly, this building has to be recognised for what it is; a modern retail pavilion. Much of the design guidance outlined particularly relates to much smaller buildings which generally have

frontages onto Grampian Road, a traditional approach is encouraged with the use of timber materials and external spot lights. I would contend that this approach is not suited to what is a modern commercial building both in terms of use and its architectural design. The guidelines provide specific advice on the size of signage within the AHR site, which is classified as a commercial zone under the guidance. Detailed sizes for signs on hotels, shops, restaurants and offices are all provided. There is no doubt that the number and scale of signs proposed here exceeds the guidance. However, there is no detailed guidance for larger modern retail units of a contemporary design, which this building clearly is.

17. The large panels that are proposed here do not reflect traditional signage in any way and in some ways can hardly be considered to be signage being a range of graphic panels with photographic images that will change with the seasons and be internally illuminated. While the panels are extensive in their nature they have little impact upon the village centre as a whole, the main panels on the western elevation of the building face onto the car park of the centre itself and those on the eastern elevation face onto the loop road, towards the back of the Cairngorm Hotel. The panels at the pedestrian entrance create a sense of entry to this side of the building so that the entrance to the retail pavilion is recognised by pedestrians approaching from the access road at the side of the Cairngorm Hotel. The panels are not visible from Grampian Road and therefore have no detrimental impact upon the character of the village centre.
18. In terms of their more localised impact the signs would be viewed from the loop road within the site and the main car park for the centre as a whole, they would not be visible from any residential properties outside of the site.
19. Conversely, and in a positive sense there has to be recognition that this is a modern, large commercial facility within a modern site that would expect to incorporate a level and nature of advertising commensurate with the nature of the use. In addition, it is contended, that the graphics panels incorporating the type of images proposed most definitely add interest to the elevations and are almost a form of art/mural rather than conventional advertisements. This approach is unusual, but in my view corresponds entirely with the contemporary design of the building as a whole and I therefore recommend approval of the application. However, it will be important that the panels are maintained and kept in clean and tidy order. This will be achieved by planning conditions. Again, I would express my concerns that the developer has (in part) implemented the scheme prior to consent, but nonetheless in my view, the proposals are acceptable.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE AIMS OF THE PARK

Conserve and Enhance the Natural and Cultural Heritage

20. The proposals represent a small addition to an existing building, the proposals have no impact upon nature conservation and in terms of the local townscape are not highly visible from outside of the commercial resort. The proposal is considered to have no impact upon this aim.

Promote Sustainable Use of Natural Resources

21. There is no information regarding the origin of the materials for the signs. However, the panels are likely to be easy to maintain and have a long life span, this is ensured by the conditions proposed.

Promote Understanding and Enjoyment of the Area

22. The proposals would be unlikely to have any significant negative, or positive impacts with regard to this aim.

Promote Sustainable Economic and Social Development

23. The signage would help to promote the commercial use of the retail pavilion and thereby contribute to the economic development remit of the national park.

RECOMMENDATION

24. That Members of the Committee support a recommendation to: **GRANT** Advertisement Consent for signage on the retail pavilion, Aviemore Highland Resort, Aviemore, subject to the following conditions:
 1. Consent hereby granted shall be for a period of 5 years, following which the signs and illuminated fixtures shall be removed to the reasonable satisfaction of the Cairngorms National Park Authority acting as Planning Authority.
 2. All advertisements displayed shall be maintained in a clean and tidy condition to the reasonable satisfaction of the Cairngorms National Park Authority acting as Planning Authority.
 3. A maintenance agreement for the upkeep of the signs shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Cairngorms National Park Authority within 6 months of the date of this decision notice. The signs shall be maintained in accordance with this agreement thereafter.

Andrew Tait
30 September 2004

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