
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

Title: REPORT ON CALLED-IN PLANNING APPLICATION

Prepared by: ANDREW TAIT PLANNING OFFICER (DEVELOPMENT CONTROL)

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSED: USE OF LAND FOR SITING 2 RESIDENTIAL CARAVANS FOR HOLIDAY LETS, CAMPING SITE, FISHING POND, SIGN AND SMALL RETAIL OUTLET, WAULKMILL, CROMDALE

REFERENCE: 04/276/CP

APPLICANT: MR & MRS GREEN, WAULKMILL

DATE CALLED-IN: 4 June 2004



Fig. 1 - Location Plan

SITE DESCRIPTION AND PROPOSAL

1. This application has been with the authority for a considerable time awaiting additional information to be supplied by the applicant.
2. The proposal is for the stocking of an existing pond with trout for commercial fishing purposes. A campsite from April to October is also proposed with a small retail outlet. The application also originally proposed 2 letting caravans and a sign at the top of the access track from the A95.
3. Trunk Roads recommended refusal of the application based upon the proposed change of use resulting in an intensification of manoeuvres onto the A95. As a result of this the applicant has sent a letter stating that the camp site would be for use of Speyside Way walkers only and that only one letting caravan would be proposed.
4. The site is between the A95 and the River Spey which is a Site of Community Importance (SCI) there are existing buildings at the site (including the applicants house) and the site is partly crossed by the Speyside Way. There is an existing pond at the site and the proposal is to stock this with trout for commercial fishing purposes, a considerable amount of additional information has been requested of the applicant including a basic red line site plan. This has not been received despite several requests and the overall detail with the application is scant.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN CONTEXT

5. In the **Highland Structure Plan 2001, General Policy G2 (Design for Sustainability)** states that proposed developments will be assessed against certain criteria, including the extent to which they, contribute to the economic and social development of the community and impact on resources such as habitats, species, landscape, scenery, freshwater systems and cultural heritage. **Policy T2 (Tourism Developments)** states that support will be given to high quality tourism development proposals, particularly those which extend the tourist season, spread economic benefits more widely and provide opportunities for the sustainable enjoyment and interpretation of the area's heritage. **Policy L4 Landscape Character** of the Structure Plan considers that the council will have regard to maintaining and enhancing present landscape character in the consideration of development proposals.
6. **Policy 2.2.9 (Tourism and Recreation) of the Badenoch and Strathspey Local Plan** states that tourist activities will continue to make a vital contribution to the economy. The priority is to ensure that broadening the range and quality of facilities is balanced with protecting the area's exceptional scenic and heritage resources. The Local Plan also states that

the more accessible intermediate lowland areas have potential for a broad range of activities and that provision should be made in the more robust locations better able to absorb visitor pressure, for upgrading facilities for recreation, tourism, interpretation and education/research. Multiple use of forest areas in particular is encouraged.

CONSULTATIONS

7. **The Scottish Executive Trunk Roads Division** object to the application as it would intensify manoeuvring from the site onto the A95.
8. **Scottish Natural Heritage** object to the proposal as it stands and note that the site is located close to the River Spey SCI and SSSI, the river being designated for populations of Atlantic salmon, sea lamprey, freshwater pearl mussels and otters. The proposal is not related to the conservation management of the site and so an appropriate assessment would be required in accordance with a range of suggested conditions to ensure that there are no significant effects on conservation interests.
9. **SEPA** object to the application based upon a lack of information, particularly that there is no detailed information on either foul or surface water drainage.
10. **Highland Council Area Roads Manager** considers that provided the holiday letting caravans and camp site would be free from the effects of a 1 in 200 years flood event, from an area roads perspective there is no further comment.
11. The **CNPA Natural Resource Group** consider that a main issue is the risk that would occur from fish escaping into the Spey therefore it is important that only rainbow or brown trout species of fish are stocked, and that the risk of fish escaping into the Spey is minimised, to safeguard existing species in the river.

REPRESENTATIONS

12. A letter of support for the proposal has been received from the Speyside Way Ranger Service (copy attached at back of the report).

APPRAISAL

13. This application is difficult to appraise given the lack of information despite requests for more details.
14. In principle such a tourist related development close to the Speyside Way could be supportable in terms of the tourism policies of both the Structure

Plan and Local Plan. In addition the proposal could be considered to contribute to achieving park aims 2, 3 and 4 in terms of it helping to promote enjoyment and understanding of the Speyside Way and localised sustainable economic benefits.

15. The applicants have provided a letter, which confirms that they would reduce the proposal to one caravan and that the campsite could be restricted to walkers on the Speyside Way in the hope that this would address the concerns of the Trunk Roads Division.
16. Despite the above, there is a range of outstanding information and it has to be noted that a range of facilities are proposed by this application which only contains a site location plan with annotated areas for the camp site, shop and caravans. There is no indication as to the exact position of the campsite, the design of the shop (or whether an existing building is proposed to be used). In addition, there is little information on surface water or foul drainage at what is a sensitive site close to the River Spey. It is not clear whether the changes proposed would satisfy the requirements of the Trunk Roads Division and it is likely that a greater level of information would be required such as the number of likely visitors and car parking spaces. My view is that if the application was granted in its current form any approval would be difficult to enforce against given the lack of clarity and detail put forward.
17. The level of detail provided means that I am unable to assess the application properly or assess the requirements of the consultees who have raised a range of concerns with regard to the application. Because of this, and the length of time the application has been lying dormant the only recommendation open to me one is for refusal of the scheme based upon its failure to demonstrate the protection of natural heritage interests at the site. Highways and drainage reasons for refusal are also proposed.
18. If the Planning Committee decide to refuse this application I would suggest that members instruct me to write a letter to the applicants setting down the level and range of detail that would enable any future application to be properly assessed.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE AIMS OF THE NATIONALPARK

Conserve and Enhance the Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Area

19. Given the lack of information the application fails to demonstrate how it would protect the natural and cultural heritage of the area.

Promote Sustainable Use of Natural Resources

20. The level of information fails to demonstrate the implications of the proposal for this aim, although the proposal would appear to concentrate several uses on one site, which may, in principle, be sustainable.

Promote Understanding and Enjoyment of the Area

21. In principle the connection between the campsite and the Speyside Way would help to promote the enjoyment and perhaps understanding of the area.

Promote Sustainable Economic and Social Development of the Area

22. Again, the proposal may contribute positively to this aim in principle, but without clearer detail there is insufficient evidence to assess these aspects against the first aim of the park.

RECOMMENDATION

23. That Members of the Committee support a recommendation to: **REFUSE Full Planning Permission** for the campsite, shop, caravans and fishing business at Waulkmill, Cromdale for the following reasons.

1. The proposal fails to provide a level of information that would ensure that the interests of the River Spey SCI and SSSI would be protected and therefore fails to ensure the protection of natural heritage. Consequently, the proposal is contrary to Highland Structure Plan Policy G2 Design for Sustainability and the conservation of natural and cultural heritage aim of the Cairngorms National Park.
2. The proposal fails to provide a level of information on services such as foul and surface water drainage, the design of the retail outlet, the detailed position of the camp site and in relation to trunk roads matters the application fails to provide information that would ensure safe access onto the A95.

Andrew Tait

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