



Committee report

Development proposed:

Alterations and extension to centre, dining and catering hall, covered walkway, storage unit, erection 4No. accommodation units and office block.

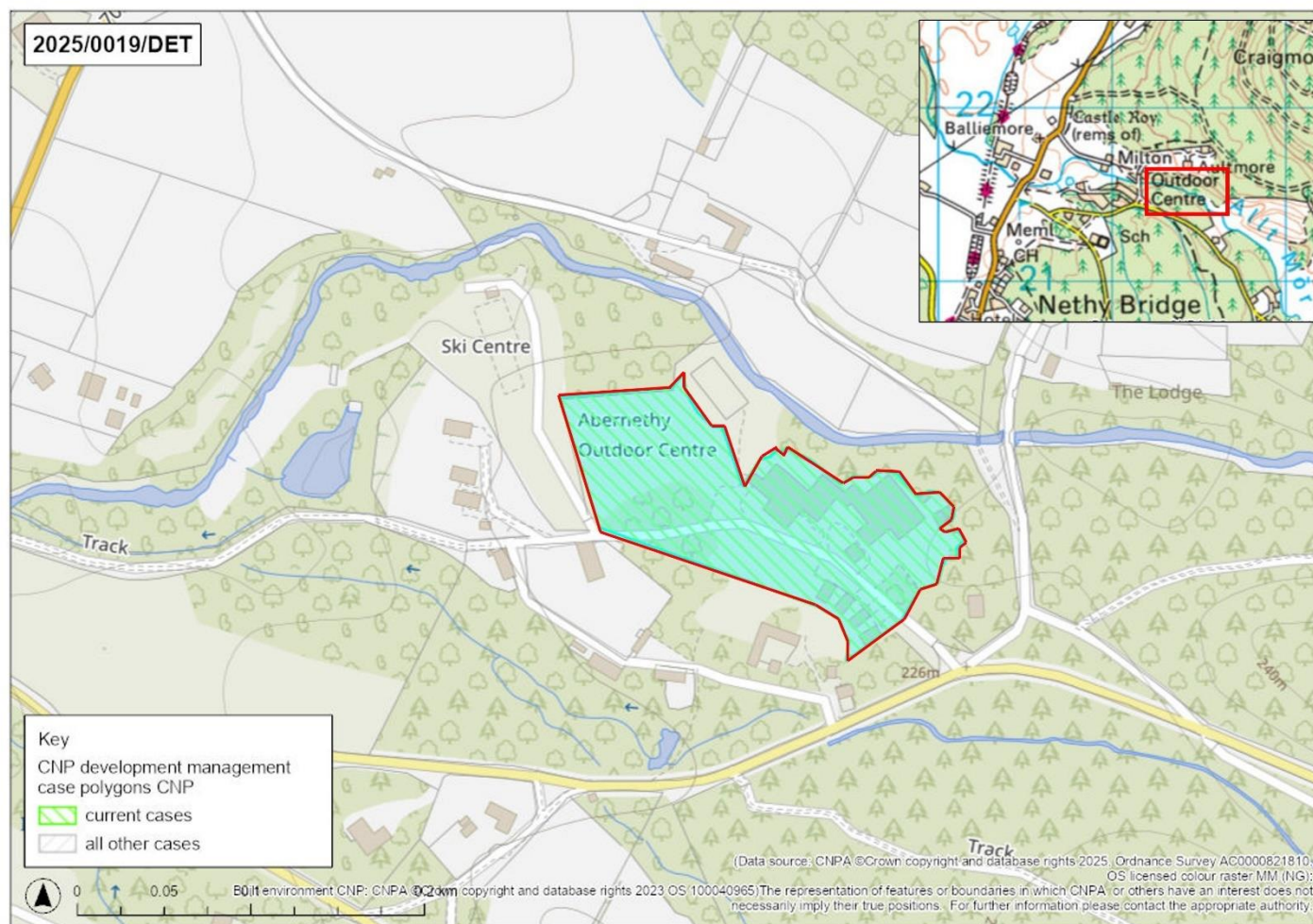
Reference: 2025/0019/DET

Applicant: Abernethy Trust Ltd

Date called-in: 31 January 2025

Recommendation: Approval, subject to conditions

Case officer: Colin Bryans, Senior Planning Officer



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Site description, proposal and history

Site description

1. The application site is the Abernethy Trust's existing Nethy Bridge Outdoor Centre, located approximately 600m to the north of Nethy Bridge. The site lies outwith any settlement boundary, as defined by the Cairngorms Local Development Plan 2021 (LDP).
2. The Nethy Bridge Outdoor Centre application site consists of a mix of woodland, open recreation grassland/lawn and a mix of buildings of a variety of scales, styles and functions. The dominant building located on the site is the "Main House" which has been historically extended and altered, at various stages, and is a mix of one and two storeys, with largely render walls and slate roofs.

Proposal

3. The drawings and documents associated with this application are listed below and are available on the Cairngorms National Park Authority website unless noted otherwise:

<http://www.eplanningcnpa.co.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=S2H06USI0CP00>

Title	Drawing number	Date on plan*	Date received
Plan – Main House - Existing Elevations	203	13/12/24	06/02/2024
Plan – Main House - Existing Roof Plan	202	13/12/24	06/02/2024
Plan – Main House - Existing Sections	204	13/12/24	06/02/2024
Plan – Existing Site Plan	101	28/01/25	06/02/2024
Plan – Dining Hall - Proposed First Floor Plan	222	13/12/24	06/02/2024



Plan – Main House - Existing Ground Floor Plan	201	13/12/24	06/02/2024
Plan – Dining Hall - Proposed Ground Floor Plan	221	13/12/24	06/02/2024
Plan – Main House - Proposed Ground Floor Plan	211	13/12/25	06/02/2024
Plan – Proposed Landscaping Plan	103	13/12/24	06/02/2024
Plan – Location Plan	n/a	n/a	06/02/2024
Plan – Proposed Site Plan	102	28/01/25	06/02/2024
Plan – Accommodation - Site Plan	230	13/12/24	06/02/2024
Plan – Main House - Proposed Sections	214	13/12/24	06/02/2024
Plan – Main House - Proposed Roof Plan	212	13/12/24	06/02/2024
Plan – Dining Hall - Proposed Roof Plan	223	13/12/24	06/02/2024
Plan – Accommodation - Roof Plan	232	n/a	06/02/2024
Plan – Accommodation - Floor Plan	231	n/a	06/02/2024
Plan – Accommodation - Service Building	235	n/a	06/02/2024
Plan – Proposed Trust Office	104	n/a	06/02/2024
Plan – Dining Hall – Proposed N & S Elevations	224	13/12/24	06/02/2024
Plan – Accommodation South & North Elevation	233	n/a	06/02/2024
Plan – Main House – Proposed Elevations	213	13/12/24	06/02/2024
Plan – Dining Hall – Proposed E & W Elevations	225	13/12/24	06/02/2024
Plan – Accommodation – East & West Elevations	234	n/a	06/02/2024
Plan – Tree Planting / Biodiversity	003	30/03/25	01/04/2025



Report – Drainage Strategy and Surface Water Management Plan	313179-HAH-XX-XX-RP-C-00001	01/12/24	06/02/2024
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*Where no specific day of month has been provided on the plan, the system defaults to the first of the month.

4. The proposed development consists of small-scale extensions and alterations to the main house, a new dining hall to be linked to the main house via a covered walkway, four new accommodation units and ancillary building, a relocated office unit, and planting/landscaping proposals.

History

5. 2021/0141/DET - Change of use to site up to 7 pods, toilet block and associated infrastructure, approved 10 May 2021.
6. 2019/0179/DET - Temporary siting of static caravan (retrospective), approved 10 June 2019.
7. 2017/0073/DET - To temporarily site a static caravan, to be used as staff accommodation during the construction phase of the new accommodation block, approved 20 February 2017.
8. 2016/0120/DET - Extension to provide a further accommodation block for the outdoor centre, approved 23 August 2016.

Habitats regulation assessment

9. It is not considered that the proposed development is likely to have a significant effect upon a designated European site. As such a Habitats Regulation Appraisal is not required in this case.



Development plan context

Policies

National policy	National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) Scotland 2045 (Policies relevant to the assessment of this application are marked with a cross (x))	
Policy 1	Tackling the climate and nature crises	X
Policy 2	Climate mitigation and adaptation	
Policy 3	Biodiversity	X
Policy 4	Natural places	X
Policy 5	Soils	
Policy 6	Forestry, woodland and trees	X
Policy 7	Historic assets and places	
Policy 8	Green belts	
Policy 9	Brownfield, vacant and derelict land, and empty buildings	
Policy 11	Energy	
Policy 12	Zero waste	
Policy 13	Sustainable transport	
Policy 14	Design, quality and place	X
Policy 15	Local living and 20 minute neighbourhoods	
Policy 16	Quality homes	
Policy 17	Rural homes	
Policy 18	Infrastructure first	
Policy 19	Heating and cooling	
Policy 20	Blue and green infrastructure	
Policy 21	Play, recreation and sport	
Policy 22	Flood risk and water management	X
Policy 23	Health and safety	
Policy 24	Digital infrastructure	
Policy 25	Community wealth building	
Policy 26	Business and industry	
Policy 27	City, town, local and commercial centres	
Policy 28	Retail	



Policy 29	Rural development	X
Policy 30	Tourism	X
Policy 31	Culture and creativity	
Policy 32	Aquaculture	
Policy 33	Minerals	

Strategic policy	Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2022 – 2027	
Local plan policy	Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan (2021) (Policies relevant to the assessment of this application are marked with a cross (x))	
Policy 1	New housing development	
Policy 2	Supporting economic growth	X
Policy 3	Design and placemaking	X
Policy 4	Natural heritage	X
Policy 5	Landscape	X
Policy 6	The siting and design of digital communications equipment	
Policy 7	Renewable energy	
Policy 8	Open space, sport and recreation	
Policy 9	Cultural heritage	
Policy 10	Resources	
Policy 11	Developer obligations	

10. All new development proposals require to be assessed in relation to policies contained in the adopted Development Plan which comprises National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) and the Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan 2021. The full wording of policies can be found at:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-planning-framework-4/documents/>
and at:

<https://cairngorms.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/CNPA-LDP-2021-web.pdf>



Planning guidance

11. Supplementary guidance also supports the Local Development Plan and provides more details about how to comply with the policies. Guidance that is relevant to this application is marked with a cross (x).

Policy 1	Housing supplementary guidance	
Policy 2	Supporting economic growth non-statutory guidance	X
Policy 3	Design and placemaking non-statutory guidance	X
Policy 4	Natural heritage non-statutory guidance	X
Policy 5	Landscape non-statutory guidance	X
Policy 7	Renewable energy non-statutory guidance	
Policy 8	Open space, sport and recreation non-statutory guidance	
Policy 9	Cultural heritage non-statutory guidance	
Policy 10	Resources non-statutory guidance	
Policy 11	Developer obligations supplementary guidance	

Consultations

12. A summary of the main issues raised by consultees now follows:
13. **Highland Council Forestry Team** raised no objections to the proposal.
14. **Highland Council Flood Risk Management Team** raised no objections to the proposal subject to the recommended condition relating to the submission and approval of a finalised surface water drainage design.
15. **CNPA Landscape Advisor** raised no objections to the proposal.
16. **Nethy Bridge Community Council** made no comment of the application.

Representations

17. No representations have been received.



Appraisal

18. Section 25 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended) requires applications to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan. This comprises the Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan 2021 (LDP), and the National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4). Where there is conflict between policies, NPF4 policies take precedence.

Principle

19. The application site is occupied by the Abernethy Trust, Nethy Bridge Outdoor Centre with the proposed development representing an expansion of the existing offering to expand the dining facilities and accommodation offering. As such, the principle of the proposed use is established at the site and is acceptable subject to detailed design consideration.
20. Furthermore, **NPF4 Policy 29: Rural development, NPF4 Policy 30: Tourism and LDP Policy 2: Supporting economic growth support the principle** of development which contributes to the viability, sustainability and diversity of the local rural economy and of extensions to existing tourist facilities and accommodation.

Design and layout

21. **NPF4 Policy 14: Design, quality and place** seeks to ensure that development proposals improve the quality of the area and are consistent with the six qualities of successful places: healthy, pleasant, connected, distinctive, sustainable and adaptable.
22. **LDP Policy 3: Design and Placemaking** also seeks to ensure that proposals improve the quality of the area and are consistent with the six qualities of successful places. This policy also seeks to protect the amenity enjoyed by neighbours.

Dining Hall

23. The proposed dining hall, including the linear link to the existing main house, is a mix of single and two storeys constructed primarily of timber cladding, timber framed windows and timber doors, light render and zinc standing seam roof



covering. The design and materials are of a contemporary nature, contrasting the more traditional architectural style of the existing main house, but at the same time paying heed to the existing and providing some continuity through the use of a consistent render. The scale and massing of the proposed dining hall is such that it will remain subservient to the existing main house.

24. The proposed scale and massing, contrasting architectural style and the use of contemporary materials will relate well to the existing building, providing a point of architectural interest, avoiding the pastiche and not challenging the hierarchical or visual dominance of the main house. The proposed dining hall is acceptable in terms of its design, scale and massing, and the proposed materials are supported.

Extensions to main house

25. A suite of internal alterations to the existing main house are proposed which are not material to the consideration of this application. External alterations to the existing building consist of an enlargement of two existing openings on the south and east elevation, a small single storey extension to the west elevation, a mono pitched roof to the north elevation and some small-scale window alterations. The materials proposed are mostly consistent with the existing. The new mono pitched roof will be light grey single ply membrane.
26. The proposed alterations and additions to the existing main house are modest in design and scale and will match the materials and tone of the existing. The proposals are acceptable in terms of design, scale and massing, and the proposed materials are supported.

Accommodation modules and office block

27. Four new single storey accommodation blocks are proposed to be located on an area of recreational lawn currently used for outdoor activities, and one single storey office block is to be relocated adjacent to the existing arc of chalet blocks. The proposed accommodation blocks will have a standing seam metal roof, dark timber cladding, timber framed doors and windows. The office to be relocated will be placed on new foundations but the existing timber and slate construction will be retained.



28. The proposed accommodation blocks are modest in design and scale and the proposed materials are in keeping with their setting. The proposals are acceptable in terms of design, scale and massing, and the proposed materials are supported.

Design and layout conclusions

29. The proposals are in accordance with **NPF4 Policy 14: Design, quality and place** and with the Cairngorms Local Development Plan **Policy 3: Design and Placemaking**.

Environment and biodiversity

30. **NPF4 Policy 1: Tackling the nature and climate crises** requires that, when considering all development proposals, significant weight will be given to the global climate and nature crises.
31. **NPF4 Policy 3: Biodiversity** seeks to ensure that development proposals protect biodiversity, reverse biodiversity loss, deliver positive effects from development and strengthen nature networks. Development proposals must include appropriate measures to conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity, in accordance with national and local guidance.
32. **NPF4 Policy 4: Natural places** seeks to ensure that development proposals protect, restore and enhance natural assets making best use of nature-based solutions. Development that has significant adverse impacts on designated sites, after mitigation, will not be supported.
33. **NPF4 Policy 6: Forestry, woodlands and trees** supports development that will protect and expand forests, woodland and tree coverage.
34. **LDP Policy 4: Natural heritage** seeks to ensure that there are no adverse effects on biodiversity interests.
35. In support of the proposals, the applicant has submitted landscaping proposals which include a new area of lawn and wildflower meadow seed planting. The applicant has also submitted an arboricultural impact assessment, a tree survey, a tree constraints plan, and a tree planting and biodiversity statement. The proposed



layout takes into account the existing mature trees located within the site boundary and care has been taken to minimise impacts on existing trees. The proposal will result in the loss of one Silver Birch and the planting of nine Scots Pine, six Rowan, fourteen Silver Birch and seven Aspen. In addition, five bat boxes and four bird boxes are to be installed on existing mature trees. Two pieces of “deadwood stumpery” are also to be located onsite.

- 36. The loss of the existing lawn and the Silver Birch will be more than compensated for by the additional tree planting, areas of lawn and wildflower meadow areas. The addition of bird/bat boxes and deadwood stumps further enhances the potential for biodiversity enhancement onsite.
- 37. The proposed development will protect, restore and enhance natural assets and will not have any material detrimental impacts on protected species. As such, the proposal complies with NPF4 Policy 1: Tackling the nature and climate crises, NPF4 Policy 3: Biodiversity, NPF4 Policy 4: Natural places, NPF4 Policy 6: Forestry, woodlands and trees and LDP Policy 4: Natural heritage.

Flooding and surface water

- 38. **NPF4 Policy 22: Flood risk and water management** seeks to ensure that developments are resilient to current and future flood risk.
- 39. The Highland Council's Flood Risk Management Team raised no objections to the proposal and confirmed that the flood risk to the development is low. A condition is recommended requiring that the finalised drainage impact assessment is submitted and approved in writing prior to any development on site commencing.

Conclusion

- 40. The proposal is to expand the offering of an existing facility which is supported in principle by NPF4 Policy 29: Rural development, NPF4 Policy 30: Tourism and LDP Policy 2: Supporting economic growth support the principle.
- 41. The proposal is of a high-quality design, scale and materials which is complimentary to the existing and in accordance with NPF4 Policy 14: Design, quality and place and with LDP Policy 3: Design and Placemaking. It will protect,



restore and enhance natural assets in compliance with NPF4 Policy 1: Tackling the nature and climate crises, NPF4 Policy 3: Biodiversity, NPF4 Policy 4: Natural places, PF4 Policy 6: Forestry, woodlands and trees and LDP Policy 4: Natural heritage, and it is acceptable in terms of impacts on flood risk and surface water drainage in accordance with NPF4 Policy 22: Flood risk and water management.

42. The proposed development therefore accords with the provisions of the development plan and no other material considerations outweigh this conclusion.

Recommendation

That members of the committee support a recommendation to APPROVE the application for alterations and extension to centre, dining and catering hall, covered walkway, storage unit, erection 4No. accommodation units and office block at Abernethy Trust, Nethy Bridge, subject to the following conditions:



Conditions

Those conditions listed below in bold text are suspensive conditions, which require to be discharged prior to implementation of the development.

1. The development to which this permission relates must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date on which the permission is granted.

Reason: The time limit condition is imposed in order to comply with the requirements of section 58 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 as amended.

2. **No development shall commence on site until samples and details of all external materials to be used in the external finish for the approved development have been submitted to and approved in writing by the CNPA acting as Planning Authority. The development shall not be brought into use unless the external finish has been applied in accordance with the approved details.**

Reason: In the interests of the appearance of the development and the visual amenities of the area and to ensure compliance with National Planning Framework 4 Policy 14: Design, quality and place and Policy 3: Design and placemaking of the Cairngorms Local Development Plan 2021.

3. **No development shall commence on site until a detailed surface water drainage design is submitted to and approved in writing by the CNPA acting as Planning Authority, in consultation with the Highland Council Flood Risk Management Team. For the avoidance of doubt, the submitted information should include calculation/simulations that demonstrate that the rate of surface water discharge from the site to the Allt Mor is limited to the equivalent pre-development rate for a range of storms up to and including a 1 in 200 year plus climate change event.**

Reason: In the interests of flood risk management and to ensure compliance with NPF4 Policy 22: Flood risk and water management.



4. All planting, landscaping and biodiversity proposals shall be carried out in accordance with the approved planting scheme and management programme before the end of the first full planting season following substantial completion of the development. Any planting which, within a period of five years from the completion of the development, in the opinion of CNPA acting as Planning Authority, is dying, being severely damaged or becoming seriously diseased, shall be replaced by plants of similar size and species to those originally required to be planted.

Reason: To ensure the implementation and management of a satisfactory scheme of landscaping in accordance with NPF4 Policy 3: Biodiversity, NPF4 Policy 4: Natural places and LDP Policy 4 Natural heritage.



Informatives

1. The person undertaking the development is required to give the Planning Authority prior written notification of the date which it is intended to commence the development. Attached to this decision notice is a Notice of Initiation of Development for completion and submission. Submission of this information assists the Cairngorms National Park Authority Monitoring and Enforcement Officer in monitoring active work within the area to ensure compliance with the approved details and to identify and correct any potential problems, as they arise, rather than later when it may be more difficult and more costly to rectify. Failure to give notice would constitute a breach of planning control which may result in enforcement action being taken.
2. Following completion of the development, a notification of completion shall, as soon as practicable, be given to the Planning Authority. Attached to this decision notice is a Notice of Completion of Development for completion and submission. Submission of this form will assist the Cairngorms National Park Authority Monitoring and Enforcement Officer in making a final inspection and checking compliance with the approved drawings and conditions. If the development hereby approved is to be carried out in phases, then a notice of completion should be submitted at the completion of each phase.