
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

Title: REPORT ON CALLED-IN PLANNING APPLICATION

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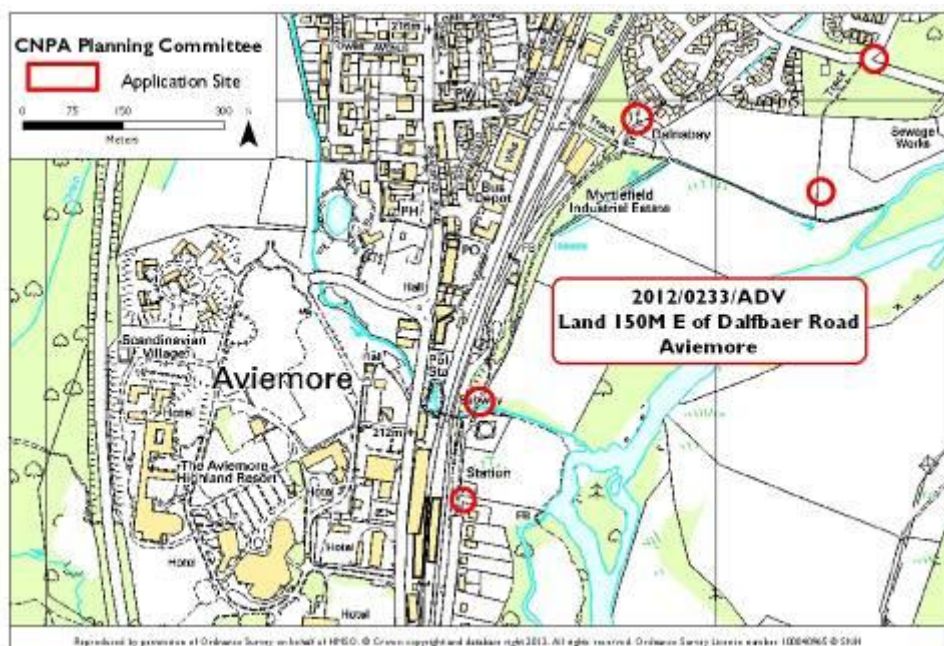
DEVELOPMENT PROPOSED: ADVERTISEMENT CONSENT FOR FINGERPOST AND INFORMATION PANELS ON LAND TO THE EAST OF DALFABER ROAD, AVIEMORE

REFERENCE: 2012/0233/ADV

APPLICANT: MR. ALEXANDER GRIERSON ON BEHALF OF AVIEMORE AND VICINITY COMMUNITY COUNCIL

DATE CALLED-IN: 20TH JULY 2012

RECOMMENDATION: APPROVE WITH CONDITIONS



Grid reference: 289782 812521

Fig. 1 - Location Plan

SITE DESCRIPTION AND PROPOSAL

1. Advertising consent is sought for the erection of a number of fingerpost signs and information panels at locations in the vicinity of Dalfaber Road and the Dalnaby area of Aviemore. The signage is proposed in conjunction with the establishment of the countryside park and path network which is the subject of a current planning application (CNPA ref. no. 2012/0232/DET and Paper 1 of this meeting agenda refers).
2. A total of five fingerpost signs are proposed. The proposed signs are a standard design specification for fingerposts within the Cairngorms National Park. Each of the signs would be free standing, and of timber construction.¹ The central post would extend to an overall height of 3.15 metres, with 900mm of this being below ground level (and packed and backfilled to secure it). Directional 'fingerblade' signs would point from the central post, and would generally convey location and distance information and point along the route of the relevant path. The fingerpost signs would be leaf green in colour.
3. The fingerposts are proposed at five distinct points on the approaches to and along the proposed new path network (identified by red circles in Fig. 5 below). The locations are (1) on the southern approach along Dalfaber Road; (2) at the southern start of the proposed new path network, opposite the railway underpass from the village centre; (3) at the junction of a predominantly pedestrian section of Dalfaber Road and a new section of path leading eastwards from this point; (4) at the junction of the east bound section of new path and the north bound section of new path; and (5) at the junction of Craggan More Road in the Dalnaby area and an existing section of south bound path which would connect with the new network.

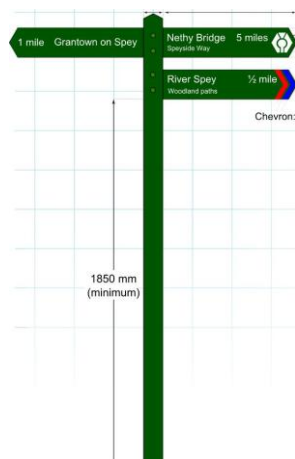


Fig. 2: Fingerpost sign



Fig.3 – proposed signage and information panel location at the start of the proposed new path

4. Three information panels are proposed in this application. One of the panels would be erected at the start of the new path network, opposite the railway underpass which connects Dalfaber Road to the centre of Aviemore. The

¹ European larch or other timber of equivalent durability and locally sourced is detailed in the specifications.

other two panels would be erected either side of a new open sided shelter which is part of the countryside park / path network proposed in the aforementioned associated planning application.

- Each panel would measure approximately 800mm x 820mm (w x h) and would be set on an oak frame and uprights. The overall dimensions of the frame would be approximately 2.7 metres x 1.2 metres. In terms of height, similar to the intended erection of the fingerposts approximately 900mm of the frame would be below ground. The panel would include a full colour display on one side of thick polycarbonate, capable of withstanding a variety of weather conditions.



Fig.4: example of the type of information panel / map board, already in place elsewhere within the National Park.

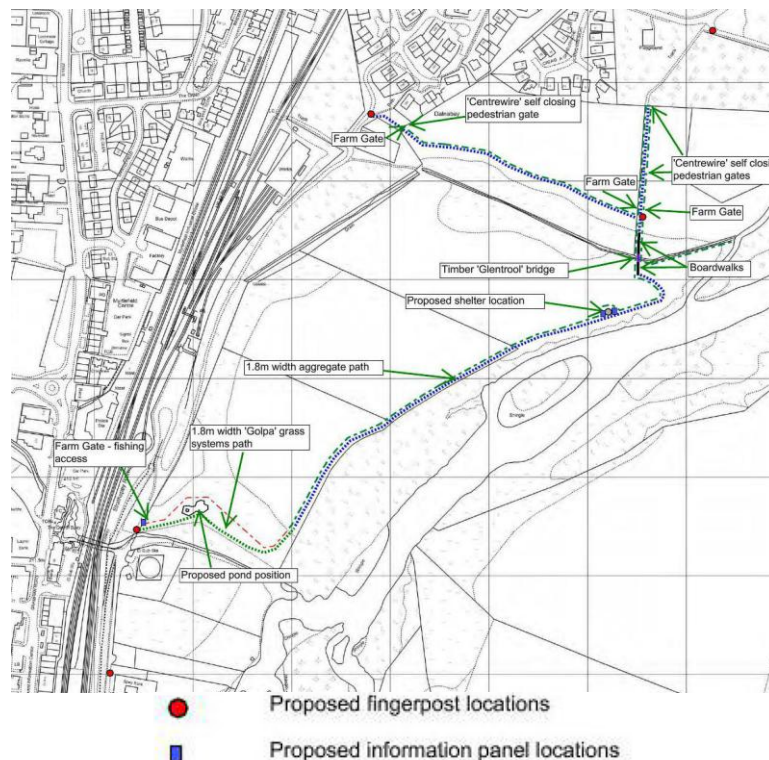


Fig. 5

DEVELOPMENT PLAN CONTEXT

National Policy

6. **Scottish Planning Policy² (SPP)** is the statement of the Scottish Government's policy on nationally important land use planning matters. It supersedes a variety of previous Scottish Planning Policy documents and National Planning Policy Guidance. Core Principles which the Scottish Government believe should underpin the modernised planning system are outlined at the outset of **SPP** and include:
 - The constraints and requirements that planning imposes should be necessary and proportionate;
 - The system shouldallow issues of contention and controversy to be identified and tackled quickly and smoothly; and
 - There should be a clear focus on quality of outcomes, with due attention given to the sustainable use of land, good design and the protection and enhancement of the built and natural environment.
7. **SPP** emphasises the key part that development management plays in the planning system, highlighting that it should “operate in support of the Government's central purpose of increasing sustainable economic growth.” Para. 33 focuses on the topic of Sustainable Economic Growth and advises that increasing sustainable economic growth is the overarching purpose of the Scottish Government. It is advised that “the planning system should proactively support development that will contribute to sustainable economic growth and to high quality sustainable places.” Planning authorities are encouraged to take a positive approach to development, recognising and responding to economic and financial conditions in considering proposals that would contribute to economic growth.
8. Under the general heading of Sustainable Development, it is stated that the fundamental principle is that development integrates economic, social and environmental objectives, and that the “aim is to achieve the right development in the right place.”
9. As a replacement for a variety of previous planning policy documents the new **Scottish Planning Policy** includes ‘subject policies’, of which many are applicable to the proposed development. Topics include economic development, rural development, and landscape and natural heritage. The following paragraphs provide a brief summary of the general thrust of each of the subject policies.
10. Open Space and Physical Activity: Para. 148 of the **SPP** states that access to opportunities for recreation make important contributions to a healthier Scotland. The planning system has a role in helping to create an environment where physical wellbeing is improved and activity made easier.
11. Landscape and natural heritage: The **Scottish Planning Policy** document recognises the value and importance of Scotland's landscape and natural heritage. It is accepted that landscape is constantly changing and the aim is to

² February 2010

facilitate positive change whilst maintaining and enhancing distinctive character. As different landscapes have different capacities to accommodate new development, the siting and design of development should be informed by landscape character. There is also an acknowledgement that the protection of the landscape and natural heritage may sometimes impose constraints on development, but the potential for conflict can be minimised and the potential for enhancement maximised through careful siting and design.

12. **Scottish Planning Policy** concludes with a section entitled 'Outcomes' in which it is stated that the "planning system should be outcome focused, supporting the creation of high quality, accessible and sustainable places through new development, regeneration and the protection and enhancement of natural heritage and historic environmental assets."

Strategic Policies

Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2012 - 2017

13. The Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2012 – 2017 is the management plan for the National Park for the next 5 years. It sets out the vision and overarching strategy for managing the Park and provides a strategic context for the Local Development Plan. Three long terms outcomes have been identified to deliver the vision for the Park, to continue the direction set out in the first National Park Plan and to together deliver the four aims of the National Park. The outcomes are :
 - 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.

Structure Plan Policy

Highland Council Structure Plan (2001)

14. **Highland Council Structure Plan** is founded on the principles of sustainable development, which are expressed as –
 - Supporting the viability of communities;
 - Developing a prosperous and vibrant local economy; and
 - Safeguarding and enhancing the natural and built environment.A variety of detailed policies emanate from the principles.
15. Section 2.4 of the Plan concentrates on the subject of landscape, stating that "no other attribute of Highland arguably defines more the intrinsic character and nature of the area than its landscape." Similar to national policy guidance, there is a recognition that landscape is not a static feature and that the protection and enhancement of landscape and scenery must be positively addressed. **Policy L4 Landscape Character** states that "the Council will have regard to the desirability of maintaining and enhancing present landscape character in the consideration of development proposals."

Local Plan Policy

Cairngorms National Park Local Plan (2010)

16. 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>
17. 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.
18. 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.
19. *Policy 6 – Landscape*: there will be a presumption against any development that does not complement and enhance the landscape character of the Park, and in particular the setting of the proposed development. Exceptions will only be made where any significant adverse effects on the landscape are clearly outweighed by social or economic benefits of national importance and all of the adverse effects on the setting of the proposed development have been minimised and mitigated through appropriate siting, layout, scale, design and construction.
20. *Policy 16 – Design Standards for New Development*: this is one of a number of policies which is intended to encourage developers to consider how they can best include the principles of sustainable development in their proposals, and consider the impact on the environment, economy and community. Policy 16 requires that all proposals are accompanied by a design statement which sets out how the requirements of the policy have been met. The design of all development is encouraged to :
 - Reflect and reinforce the traditional pattern and character of the surrounding area and reinforce the local vernacular and local distinctiveness, whilst encouraging innovation in design and materials;
 - use materials and landscaping that will complement the setting of the development;
 - demonstrate sustainable use of resources; and
 - be in accordance with the design standards and palette of materials as set out in the Sustainable Design Guide.

21. *Policy 34 – Outdoor Access*: the policy encourages development which improves opportunities for responsible outdoor access and adheres to the Cairngorms Outdoor Access Strategy. Development proposals which would result in a reduction of public access rights or loss of linear access (such as core paths, rights of way, or other paths and informal recreation areas) will only be permitted where an appropriate or improved alternative access solution can be secured.

Supplementary Planning Guidance

22. 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.

Sustainable Design Guide

23. The guide highlights the fact that the unique nature and special quality of the Cairngorms National Park and the consequent desire to conserve and enhance this distinctive character. The guidance has at its core the traditional approach to design which aims to deliver buildings which provide a resource efficient, comfortable and flexible living environment. The **Sustainable Design Guide** requires the submission of a Sustainable Design Statement with planning applications. It is intended that applicants would use the Sustainable Design Statement to demonstrate how standards set out in the Sustainable Design Checklist will be achieved.
24. One of the key sustainable design principles referred to in the document is that “future development in the Park should be sensitively located, reflect existing development pattern and setting, and respect the natural and cultural heritage of the Park.” Developments are also required to reflect traditional materials and workmanship, and take on board innovation, contemporary design and the emergence of modern methods of construction.

CONSULTATIONS

25. **CNPA Access**: It is noted in the response from the CNPA’s Outdoor Access Officer that the proposal would have a positive impact, as the signs and information boards would help to orientate the public and could encourage them to use the new countryside park.

REPRESENTATIONS

26. No representations have been received in respect of the development proposal.

APPRAISAL

Principle

27. As detailed at the outset of this report, the signage is proposed in conjunction with the current proposal for the establishment of a countryside park / path network, with the latter being the subject of Planning Paper 1 of this agenda (CNPA ref. no. 2012/0232/DET). Paper 1 explores the proposal for the

development of the path network and recommends at its conclusion that planning permission be granted for that development. On the basis of accepting the principle of the countryside park / path network, the current proposal seeking advertising consent for directional signage and information boards is reasonable and would be of significant benefit to users of the new path network.

Nature of signage and interpretative panels

28. The proposed fingerpost signs and information panels are of a generic design, which has been developed as a standard specification for this type of signage within the Cairngorms National Park. Fingerpost signs and information panels of this type have been accepted and are in place at a wide variety of locations across the National Park. The size, colour and configuration of the signage is appropriate to ensure that it assimilates into its setting, be it either rural, semi rural or within settlements. The consistency of signage and the generic information, symbols and colours proposed on the fingerpost signs would also be of benefit to users, as it would provide an immediate and clear understanding of access opportunities in the locality.
29. The content of the information panels has the potential to contain a wide variety of information, tailored to suit the specific locations. Nonetheless, the style of the detail on the boards would be consistent with the format used on similar boards across the National Park in terms of font size, colour and the use of photos, logos and maps.

Conclusion

30. The combination of fingerpost signs and information panels which are the subject of this application are acceptable and are considered to be a positive addition to the new path network which is also proposed in the area. Given that the signs will be associated with the new path network it is recommended in the event of granting advertising consent, that a condition is including stipulating that the signage may only be erected in conjunction with the commencement of the development of the path network.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE AIMS OF THE NATIONAL PARK

Conserve and Enhance the Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Area

31. The proposed signage and interpretative panels are limited in scale and are of a design which is consistent with those used elsewhere within the National Park. The identified locations of the fingerpost signage and panels would not give rise to any adverse impacts in relation to the natural or cultural heritage of the area.

Promote Sustainable Use of Natural Resources

32. Timber, which is a sustainable resource, is the predominant material used to construct the fingerpost signs and the frame and uprights for the interpretative panels.

Promote Understanding and Enjoyment of the Area

33. The provision of directional signage and information boards at key locations in the vicinity of the proposed new countryside park and path network would assist and encourage locals and visitors to explore the area, and in doing so they have the opportunity to gain an increased appreciation of the special qualities of the area.

Promote Sustainable Economic and Social Development of the Area

34. The provision of directional signage and information boards at key locations in the vicinity of the proposed new countryside park and path network would assist and encourage locals and visitors to explore the area. As such the potential attraction of additional visitors could have a positive impact on the economy of the area.

RECOMMENDATION

That Members of the Committee support a recommendation GRANT advertising consent for the erection of fingerposts and information panels on land to the east of Dalfaber Road, Aviemore, subject to the following conditions :

1. The development to which this permission relates must be begun within three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 59 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 as amended by the Planning etc (Scotland) Act 2006.

2. All signage hereby consented shall only be erected in conjunction with the commencement of the development of the path network approved under CNPA Planning Ref. No. 2012/0232/DET.

Reason: In the interests of orderly development and to prevent a proliferation of unnecessary signage.

Advice note:

- (a) It is recommended that the advice of the CNPA's Access Team and Visitor Services Officers are sought in relation to the content of the signage and interpretative panels.

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5 September 2012

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.