
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

Title: REPORT ON CALLED-IN PLANNING APPLICATION

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(DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT)

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSED: FULL PLANNING PERMISSION FOR THE ERECTION OF TWO DWELLING HOUSES ON PLOTS 12 AND 13, INVERCAULD GARDENS, GLENSHEE ROAD, BRAEMAR

REFERENCE: 08/323/CP

APPLICANT: NORTHBANK SERVICES C/O STEWART ANDERSON ARCHITECTURAL SERVICES, BALLATER

DATE CALLED-IN: 19TH SEPTEMBER 2008.

RECOMMENDATION : APPROVE WITH CONDITIONS

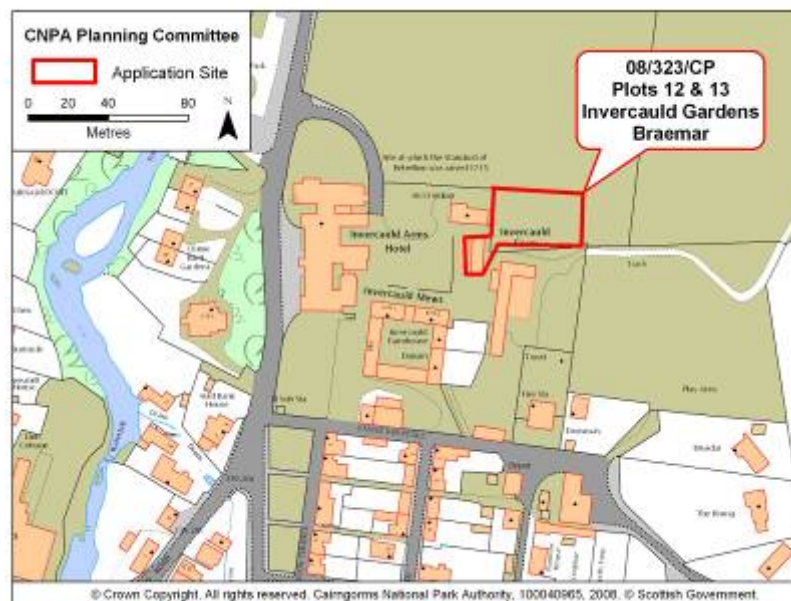


Fig. 1 - Location Plan

SITE DESCRIPTION AND PROPOSAL

1. Full planning permission is sought in this application for the erection of two dwelling houses on land which is known as Invercauld Gardens in the northern area of Braemar, to the rear of the Invercauld Arms Hotel complex. The land was originally part of the former Invercauld Farm. The site is part of a larger parcel of land on which full planning permission was granted by the Cairngorms National Park Authority in 2006 for a residential development. The site encompassed the current plot, as well as the derelict steading to the south and the former bus station building and its associated land, which are bounded by Castleton Place. Planning permission was granted for 12 unit residential development consisting of the conversion of the bus station building into two flats, the construction of six dwelling houses (arranged in two terraced blocks),¹ the conversion of the steading to form three dwelling houses, and also the erection of a single storey dwelling house on the site of the current planning application. It is my understanding that the current applicants, 'Northbank Services' have acquired the overall site area and are progressing plans for its development. The current proposal would essentially result in the creation of one additional dwelling unit on the overall site area.
2. The land which is the subject of this current application extends to an area of approximately 1,260 square metres (0.31 acres), with each of the two plots occupying equal portions of the site. The dwelling house proposed on each plot is similar in design to the single house previously approved. The internal layout accommodates three bedrooms, bathroom, and an open plan living room, dining and kitchen area. An attached garage is also incorporated. The submitted drawings refer to the use of 'sash and case look alike'² windows. External doors in the front elevation have timber linings. A small canopy is proposed above the front door. The external materials and the colour scheme proposed is consistent with that of the earlier approved development, including the use of buff/pink granite on the front elevation, with buff / pink wet dash finish on the remainder of the property, and all under a grey slate roof.

¹ The six terraced dwelling units are to be provided as affordable housing.

² The drawings submitted in the course of the earlier application on the site also specified 'sash and case look alike windows.' However, a planning condition was included requiring the incorporation of authentic timber sash and case windows.



Fig. 2 : Proposed front elevation

- The proposed site is on land to the rear of the Invercauld Arms Hotel. A single storey dwelling house, which is known as Invercauld Farm Cottage, exists immediately adjacent to the west of the site. The southern site boundary lies close to the aforementioned steading, and the remaining eastern and northern boundaries are open to the adjacent field. The northern (rear) area of the site is quite visible, particularly on the approaches along the A93 from the direction of Ballater. The area is currently open, only being demarcated from the adjacent field by a post and wire fence. The site would be accessed via the existing arrangements, where access is currently taken from a small lane off the A93 to the north of the Invercauld Arms Hotel, or alternatively off Castleton Place at the southern end of the overall development site.

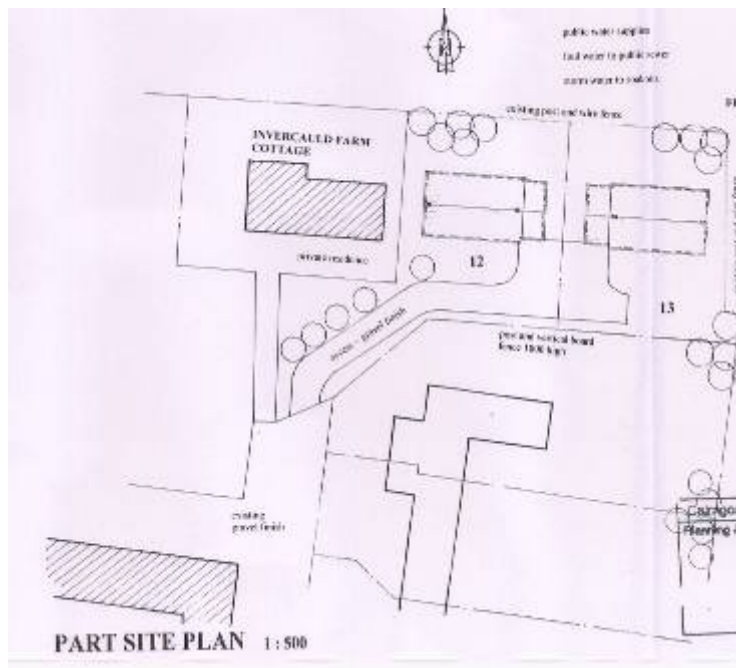


Fig. 3 : Proposed site layout plan
(units 12 and 13 are the subject of this current application)

4. It is proposed to connect the development to the public water supply. Foul sewage would be disposed of via the public sewer and surface water would be disposed of to a separate soakaway. Two car parking spaces are to be provided on each of the proposed house plots.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN CONTEXT

5. In the national context, **SPP 3 Planning for Housing** encourages the provision of well-located, high quality new housing, suggesting that good housing can support economic competitiveness, social justice and sustainable development. Para. 6 of the document stresses that housing is a key factor in defining the character of cities, towns and villages. **SPP 3** concedes that the design of new housing is not always given sufficient priority and urges that the environmental impact of housing be given much greater importance. Para. 14, in discussing the Form of Development highlights the fact that good layout is at the heart of making residential environments safe and welcoming, with pedestrian activity adding vitality and increasing the feeling of personal safety. **SPP 3** also highlights the relevance of good landscape design, stressing that it can make a significant contribution to environmental quality, but cannot compensate for poor layout and design.
6. **PAN 65 – Planning and Open Space** describes open space as a valuable asset which is important for our quality of life. It concedes that the future growth of settlements will have implications for open space, but advises that this should not lead to a loss of amenity and should place a greater emphasis on the need for a “well-distributed, well-connected and accessible quality of open space.”
7. **PAN 67** deals with the subject of **Housing Quality** and recognises the fact that many people want to live in a place that has a distinct identity, “rather than one that could be anywhere.” **PAN 67** advises that all development has the potential to contribute to a sense of neighbourhood and also highlights the fact that “thoughtlessly chosen standard house types and inappropriate materials look disconcertingly out of place.” In a detailed section on layout, it also urges developers to think about the qualities and characteristics of places and not consider sites in isolation.

8. The strategy set out in the **North East Scotland Structure Plan (NEST)** details a number of 'core land use objectives' and 'locational objectives.' The strategy focuses future development on the main settlements. In terms of locational objectives, objective 7 of the Strategy is to "secure a choice of location for a viable supply and adequate variety of land for housing (including affordable housing), employment, services and open space." This is to be achieved by relating development to each settlement's ability to accommodate such development without loss of amenity or identity; ensuring that the particular uses proposed for each site maximise the overall sustainability of the community; and by giving preference to the use and re-use of sites within existing settlements.

9. In a section entitled **Living in the North East** it is clearly stated that housing is to be located within settlements which are accessible to services and facilities and support economic development. In discussing **General Housing Considerations**, **NEST** refers to ensuring that developments are well sited and properly designed to fit their surroundings and it also advises that every effort should be made to ensure that a full range of market sectors is catered for in all localities. On the subject of **Affordable Housing** the plan refers to evidence that there are significant numbers of people in housing need in the North East and accordingly it is stated that "the appropriate level of affordable housing is likely to be around 35% across the structure plan area." The policy on affordable and special needs housing is detailed in **Policy 14** of **NEST** where it is stated that "the Councils, in conjunction with private developers and housing agencies, shall seek to secure appropriate levels of affordable and special needs housing."

The Aberdeenshire Local Plan 2006

10. The subject site is located within the settlement area of Braemar as identified in the Aberdeenshire Local Plan. The site however falls outwith the Conservation Area which occupies a large area of the Braemar settlement.

11. The subject of parking, servicing and accessibility is dealt with in **Policy Inf\2** of the Local Plan, where it is stated that development will be approved in principle if
 1. it is well related to existing settlements, avoids dispersed patterns of development, and complies with the Council's maximum parking standards;
 2. it can be accessed conveniently by walkers and cyclists, and is close to existing public transport services, where available;and

3. it is designed to be safe, convenient, resource efficient and cause minimal impact on the character of the site and surrounding area.

The policy also makes reference to developer contributions being provided were required to mitigate development impact.

12. Drainage and water standards are discussed in **Policy Inf\4**, which states that development will be approved in principle if it will not overload existing mains infrastructure or it is practical for the developer to provide for new infrastructure. **Policy Inf\5** discusses additional drainage standards –Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS). “Development will be approved in principle if surface water treatment is dealt with in a sustainable manner and in ways that avoid flooding and pollution.” Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems will be required as a means of achieving sustainable disposal and / or re-use / recycling of surface water.
13. The subject site is located within the Deeside and Lochnagar National Scenic Area. **Policy Env\5A** refers to National Scenic Areas and states that development which would have an adverse effect on a National Scenic Area will be refused unless the developer demonstrates that (a) any significant adverse effects on the quality for which the area has been designated are clearly outweighed by social and economic benefits of national importance; (b) the objectives of the designation and overall integrity of the area will not be compromised; and (c) there is no alternative site for the development. The stated aim of the policy is to provide the best landscape within Aberdeenshire with adequate protection against damaging development.
14. **Appendix 1** of the Local Plan provides design guidance for new developments. It provides guidance on location, which should make best use of the existing network of public transport, infrastructure and services; site location, advising that a successful development requires careful attention to the space and relationship between buildings as well as to the design of buildings themselves; and layout. In terms of density, it should relate to the position of the proposed site within the settlement, should make efficient use of land and should respect the landform and special features of the site. **Appendix 1** also provides advice on issues such as access and parking, the provision of public and private open space³, as well as the need to protect neighbouring properties. Building Design is also

³ The provision of public open space is dealt with in more detail in Appendix 6.

discussed, with guidance provided under a number of headings including scale, shape and proportions, as well as design details.

Cairngorms National Park Plan (2007)

15. The **Cairngorms National Park Plan** sets out the strategic objectives for the Park under three headings, all of which are of relevance to the development proposal – (i) conserving and enhancing the Park; (ii) living and working in the Park; and (iii) enjoying and understanding the Park. In relation to conserving and enhancing the Park the objectives set out in the Plan include maintaining and enhancing the distinctive landscapes across the Park and ensuring that development complements and enhances the landscape character of the Park. The Plan also requires that new development in settlements and in surrounding areas should complement and enhance the character, pattern and local identity of the built and historic environment. In elaborating on this particular objective it is advised that new development should enhance the local identity, quality of public space and surrounding environment and that high quality design should be a feature of all new developments.
16. Under the heading of **Living and Working in the Park**, the Park Plan includes a specific section on Housing. Objectives include increasing the accessibility of rented and owned housing to meet the needs of communities throughout the Park and ensuring that there is effective land and investment for market and affordable housing to meet the economic and social needs of communities throughout the Park.

CONSULTATIONS

17. **Scottish Water** has no objection to the proposed development although the consultation response advises that this does not guarantee a connection to Scottish Water's infrastructure. This will be decided when a separate application is made to Scottish Water's infrastructure section following any grant of full planning permission. At the present time Scottish Water advise that Braemar water treatment works currently has capacity to service the proposed development, with the water network currently able to supply the new demand. Braemar waste water treatment works also currently has capacity to service the proposed development and the waste water network is also able to accommodate the new demand.
18. The **Planning Gain** section of Aberdeenshire Council has examined the proposal and the consultation response indicates

that a financial contribution is required towards secondary education. Determination of the level of financial contribution required has taken into account the already negotiated agreement in respect of the earlier permission relating to this and adjacent lands and the number of units approved therein. This current application has therefore been treated as one additional unit only for the purposes of calculating the level of financial contribution required.

19. The **Transportation and Infrastructure** (Roads) service of Aberdeenshire Council has assessed the proposal and has no objection. The service recommends in the event of the granting of planning permission that a condition be imposed requiring the provision of 2 off street car parking spaces per dwelling , within the site, and surfaced with hardstanding material.

REPRESENTATIONS

20. No representations have been received in connection with the proposed development.

APPRAISAL

21. In assessing this application it is necessary to examine the proposed development in the context of a broad range of issues, including national planning policy and guidance, Structure Plan and Local Plan policy, the infrastructural implications of the proposal, and the aims of the Cairngorms National Park and also to take into account the planning permission which has already been granted on the subject site, which this current proposal is intended to be linked.
22. In terms of applicable planning policy the suitability of the site for development has already been accepted through the granting of full planning permission for a larger residential development encompassing this site and the adjacent land, with recognition of its position within the settlement area of Braemar and where there was also recognition of the fact that the adjoining land had the benefit of an allocation for housing development. It is also necessary to note that the land is within the Deeside and Lochnagar National Scenic Area. I do not however consider that the nature of the proposal would give rise to an adverse impact on the designation. Instead, the same case can be made as in the previous application on the site, that an appropriate form of development in this particular location would have the potential

to enhance the immediate locality, improving upon the unkempt appearance of the land at present, and creating a more attractive view on the approach to Braemar from the north.

23. North East Scotland Together Structure Plan policy refers to the provision of affordable housing, suggesting that an appropriate level of housing across the Plan area is around 35%. Given that the development proposal relates to a larger permitted development, and would essentially result in an additional residential unit on the overall larger site, it is appropriate to consider the implications for affordable housing provision. Through the earlier planning permission for twelve dwellings on the site, 50% of the properties were secured as affordable housing.⁴ Therefore, even with the addition of one additional unit which would result from a potential approval of this current application, the level of affordable housing that will ultimately be provided on the overall site exceeds existing planning policy requirements. It is also worth taking into account that the proposed plot size now associated with each of the dwelling houses in this current application has decreased from the originally permitted plot size. Reference to a reduction in the size of the plots is not intended as a criticism, as each of the two plots would provide adequate areas of private open space provision, as well as including the required levels of on site car parking provision. There is a possibility that the introduction of two dwelling houses, each on modest plot sizes, as opposed to the earlier proposal for one dwelling on a much larger plot, could perhaps result in the properties being more affordable on the open market, which could potentially benefit local buyers.
24. As detailed in earlier sections of this report the design of the dwelling houses and the materials that are proposed to be used, are generally consistent with the earlier approved proposals for a new dwelling house on this site. The use of buff / pink granite on the front elevation and the buff / pink wet dash finish on all other elevations reflects the materials permitted on the other new build elements of the larger approved residential development. The choice of materials in the earlier application was guided to a large extent by the advice of **Historic Scotland** and also the **Built and Cultural Heritage** section of Aberdeenshire Council, and was a recognition of traditional building materials in the area as well as the fact that a large proportion of the larger site area is within the Braemar Conservation Area. In addition, similar to the

⁴ The six new build terraced properties are to be provided as affordable housing. Their provision has been regulated through a Section 75 agreement, and I understand that negotiations are currently on going between the developer and a Registered Social Landlord.

previous requirements for the larger development, I recommend in the event of consideration being given to the granting of planning permission that the use of 'sash and case lookalike' windows as currently proposed is not accepted and instead that a condition be applied requiring the incorporation of authentic timber sash and case windows. The overall design and materials would ultimately assist in assimilating the new structures into the village landscape. Finally, as in the case of the earlier approval on the site, I would also suggest that a comprehensive landscaping plan is required for the two currently proposed plots, in order to further minimise the impact of development, particularly when viewed from areas to the north and east.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE AIMS OF THE NATIONAL PARK

Conserve and Enhance the Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Area

25. The proposed development would only result in the development of one additional unit above the number already approved. It is proposed in a relatively open area of the site, which has an unkempt appearance at present. While the appropriate development of the site would give rise to localised improvements, the development could not be considered to either significantly contribute to or detract from the conservation or enhancement of the natural and cultural heritage of the area.

Promote Sustainable Use of Natural Resources

26. The source of the materials to be used in the development proposal has not been finalised and it is not therefore possible to assess whether or not the development promotes the sustainable use of natural resources.

Promote Understanding and Enjoyment of the Area

27. The proposed development would not directly contribute towards the achievement of this aim. It could however provide an opportunity for enhancing this area of the site and thereby improving the visual amenity of the area.

Promote Sustainable Economic and Social Development of the Area

28. The proposal is generally positive in terms of this aim as it enhances the mix of housing that would be available within the overall housing development on the larger site that it is associated with.

RECOMMENDATION

29. That Members of the Committee support a recommendation to :

Grant full planning permission for the erection of two dwelling houses on plots 12 and 13 Invercauld Gardens, Glenshee Road, Braemar, subject to the following conditions :

1. The development to which this permission relates must be begun within five years from the date of this permission.
2. Vertically sliding timber sash and case windows shall be used throughout the development.
3. Prior to the commencement of any wall rendering works, sample panels, approximately 1 metre square, of the wet harling shall be prepared on site for the inspection and further written approval of the CNPA acting as Planning Authority.
4. 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 Cairngorms National Park Authority acting as Planning Authority.
5. Prior to the commencement of development comprehensive drainage measures according with SUDS principles shall be submitted for the agreement of the Cairngorms National Park Authority acting as Planning Authority, in consultation with Aberdeenshire Council. The SUDS scheme shall be implemented and operational prior to the occupation of any dwelling within the development.
6. A suitable management and maintenance agreement shall be established in respect of any SUDS measures, hard and soft landscaped areas, roads and footpaths not intended or not suitable for adoption by a statutory authority.
7. All car parking areas, driveways and other hard standing areas shall have a durable, dust free, porous surface.
8. All public services for the development, including electrical, cable television and telephone cables, shall be located underground throughout the site. All such work shall be

carried out prior to road surfacing and junction boxes shall be provided by the developer.

9. Prior to the commencement of development, a detailed landscaping plan shall be submitted for the written agreement of the Cairngorms National Park Authority, acting as Planning Authority. In particular the plan shall include comprehensive details of all species (which should be of indigenous origin), planting location and numbers to be planted, as well as details of height and girth at time of planting and projected growth rates.
10. All new landscaping shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details. The landscaping shall be completed within one year of the commencement of works. Any trees or shrubs that die or become seriously damaged or diseased within a period of five years from the time of planting shall be replaced with others of a similar size and species, suited to the climate of the area, within the next planting season.

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6 November 2008

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.