
CAIRNGORMSNATIONALPARKAUTHORITY

Title: REPORTONCALLED -INPLANNING
APPLICATION

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(DEVELOPMENTCONTROL)

DEVELOPMENTPROPOSED: FORMATION OF CAR PARK AT
INVEREY,BRAEMAR

REFERENCE: 05/173/CP

APPLICANT: UPPER DEESIDE ACCESS TRUST, UNIT
1, ABOYNE CASTLE BUSINESS
CENTRE,ABOYNE

DATECALLED -IN: 22APRIL,2005



Fig.1 -LocationPlan

SITE DESCRIPTION AND PROPOSAL

1. The application is for full planning permission to formalise a parking area at Inverey that has been in use for a number of years. The area of ground is flat and open, and extends to approximately 0.14 hectares. Private houses are located on the north side of the Braemar to Linn O'Dee road along the north boundary of the application site, and mature Scots/pine conifer woodland lies along the southern boundary of the site. The ground rises to the south towards the trees. The applicants indicate that this proposal will enhance the existing informal carpark, with some restoration of grassy areas adjacent.
2. The area of ground is at the foot of Glen Eye beside the public road from Braemar to Linn of Dee. The area has been used by visitors to the area, as a convenient place for them to park vehicles off the road surface, and with constant use, the ground has become worn (muddy at times) and unsightly. The site is used as an access point for a range of popular walks including the Munros Carn Bhac and Ben Lutharn Mhor. At peak times as many as 40 parked cars have been seen in this locality. This proposal is to set out a formal parking area for 21 cars, which will result in an environmental improvement to the area. The off-road parking facility will be surfaced and drained to provide a more sustainable parking area. The design avoids straight edges. Low grass banks / bunds will be formed around the parking area; the surface of the parking area will be hardcored and finished with local rolled granite aggregate; stone setts will be used to delineate parking spaces and the access will be tarmaced. A short link path will be provided to the estate track at the foot of Glen Eye. A supporting statement which accompanies the application is attached at the back of the report.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN CONTEXT

3. The site lies adjacent to the Cairngorms **Special Protection Area**, and within the Deeside and Lochnagar **National Scenic Area (NSA)**.
4. In the **Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire Structure Plan 2001 -2016 (North East Scotland Together, NEST)** Policy 19 states that development which would have an adverse effect on a Natura 2000 or Ramsar site (the SPA) will only be permitted where there is no alternative solution and there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social, environmental or economic nature. Where a priority habitat or species (as defined in Annex 1 of the Habitats Directive) would be affected, prior consultation with the European Commission (through Scottish Natural Heritage) is required unless the development is necessary for overriding public health or safety reasons.

5. In the **Finalised Aberdeenshire Local Plan** the main policy that covers this location is **Policy Env 11** (International Nature Conservation Sites) where development that would have an adverse effect on a Natura 2000 or a Ramsar site will be refused unless the developer proves:
- (a) there are imperative reasons of overriding national interest, including those of a social, environmental or economic nature;
 - (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.
- Where development is allowed which could affect any of these designated sites, including beyond their boundaries, the developer must demonstrate that adequate measures will be taken to conserve and enhance the site's ecological, geological and geomorphological interest. **Policy Env 15** provides protection to NSAs, only permitting a new development where its scale, location or design does not detract from the quality or character of the landscape, either in part or as a whole. In all cases the highest standards of design will be required.

CONSULTATIONS

6. **SNH** does not object to the development provided it is subject to conditions to avoid any significant effect on capercaillie (adjacent woodland to south of car park). Advice is also given to minimise any landscape and visual impacts created by the proposal.
7. **SNH** recommend a condition is attached to any consent that requires construction work to be carried out either after mid -May or does not commence until after 10am to avoid any disturbance to lekking capercaillie. If such a condition is not attached, then in **SNH's** view, a significant effect is likely and an appropriate assessment of the implications of the proposal for the European interests should be undertaken by Cairngorms National Park Authority as the relevant component authority under the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c) Regulations 1994. Without an appropriate condition, **SNH** would object to the development.
8. It is also recommended that consideration be given to signing the proposed route from the car park to the existing track, to minimise the likelihood of visitors accessing this track through the adjacent woodland. In order to better integrate the car park with the surrounding area, more natural bunding should be created, and some carefully designed planting provided (with appropriate, native species) for example between the car park and the road.
9. **Aberdeenshire Council's Transportation and Infrastructure Service** has commented that there is no objection to the development provided that the first 5 metres of the access is surfaced with bitmac,

and the litter bin is relocated a minimum of 4.5 metres from the carraigeway (or within the car park site).

REPRESENTATIONS

10. Non-received

APPRAISAL

11. The main considerations in relation to this planning application are whether the land use, and the physical development, are appropriate to this area and to the site.
12. The site lies within the Cairngorms National Park, and the area of Glen Eye is a popular one for visitors and tourists who come to access a range of hills and tracks. Many of the walks are publicised by guidebooks for visitors and tourists to use and experience, and therefore there is a natural demand for car parks to be close to walk starting points. In forest areas and in country parks specific car parks are often to be found for walkers to use and set off from. In other rural locations, car parks are not so common and visitors tend to use lay-bys and road verges, quite often causing traffic hazards and/or damage to the local vegetation and verges.
13. In more sensitive locations – areas of high landscape value, or special conservation/protection – there is an argument that visitor pressures should be more actively managed. This can be done, in part by limiting the capacity for parking in these areas, which has the added value of protecting and safeguarding the special value of these areas. This application proposes to provide parking spaces and turning space for 21 cars, which has been estimated to provide sufficient capacity for most times of the year. It is accepted that at the peak periods there may still be some parking on the verges, but for most of the year visitors will tend to use the formal car park first. Coach parking is not encouraged as part of this scheme. A sign is to be erected to advise coaches to drop off walkers and proceed to the Linn of Dee where coach parking can be accommodated.
14. The design of the parking area is simple, and will not create a prominent feature in the local landscape. With the careful use of banking around the parking bays, this will help to prevent sporadic damage to the remainder of the open ground. The applicant's description of the banking around the parking area refers to some of these as 'bunds'. The banking should be sufficient to discourage additional 'wild' parking or avoid drivers accessing or exiting the parking area other than using the formal tarmac access point (which will have good visibility onto the public road). It would be preferable to see any recontouring of the land out with the car park to have a more

natural shape (rather than formal bunds) similar to their irregular banking along the edge of the trees to the south. This can be achieved by condition No 6.

15. An opportunity could be taken, with the unavoidable disturbance to the ground surfaces around the parking area, to introduce some local wild flower plants or seeds as well as grass seeds that are indigenous to the locality (rather than re-turfing all the surfaces). SN H's suggestion of 'designed planting' between the car park and could affect access visibility, if planting is other than grass and wildflowers.
16. The proposed development is to be supported, as this will regularise the parking that takes place here in a manner that will not continue the erosion of the road verges, and create a safer parking area, as well as a more 'user friendly' facility for visitors to the area. The quality of the development should be appropriate for the NSA and the special character of this area. Conditions are recommended to address the issues raised by consultees, and also other recommendations are suggested as advice to enhance the development further.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE AIMS OF THE NATIONAL PARK

Conserve and Enhance the Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Area

17. There are clearly pressures in this area for visitors to park vehicles off road in a haphazard manner, which is harmful to the local environment. This proposal will manage the use of this open area of ground in a more orderly manner, with reduced damage to the area physically and visually, to the benefit of the local natural heritage.

Promote Sustainable Use of Natural Resources

18. Some of the materials to be used will be sourced locally – the aggregate, the soil and turf.

Promote Understanding and Enjoyment of the Area

19. Some of the visitors to the area would not be happy to see the area damaged as it has been previously with 'ad hoc' parking on rough and sometimes muddy ground. The provision of a more user friendly parking area with natural landscaping around the site, will hopefully increase public awareness and appreciation of the quality of the local environment.

Promote Sustainable Economic and Social Development of the Area

20. Providing such facilities for visitors and tourists in the area will promote the use and enjoyment of this locality for these people, and may encourage other future visitors or longer stays in the area - to the benefit of the local economy.

RECOMMENDATION

21. That Members of the Committee support a recommendation to:
GRANT Full Planning Permission for the formation of a Car Parking area, at Inverey, Braemar, subject to the following conditions,
 1. The development to which this permission relates must be begun within 5 years from the date of this permission.
 2. Within the months of April and May works shall only be carried out between the hours of 10am to 5pm each day.
 3. That the turfing or re-seeding of the grassed areas surrounding the new parking area shall be carried out using a natural grass mix appropriate to this rural site, agreed with the Cairngorms National Park Authority acting as Planning Authority, and shall include some areas for sowing of wildflower seeds found naturally in this area.
 4. That not less than the first 5 metres of the access into the car park shall have a tarmac finish, to the satisfaction of the Cairngorms National Park Authority acting as Planning Authority.
 5. That the litter bin shall not be located closer than 4.5 metres to the public road.
 6. Further detailed cross sections of the recontouring/bunding shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Cairngorms National Park Authority acting as Planning Authority prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved, the scheme shall then be implemented in accordance with the agreed details.

ADVICE NOT TO APPLICANTS :

1. You are advised that in relation to condition No 6 any bunding/recontouring shall be designed in a manner to provide variable height and width to avoid straight lines and to ensure that the banking appears as natural as possible.
2. It is also recommended that consideration be given to signing the proposed route from the car park to the existing track, to minimise the likelihood of visitors accessing this track through the adjacent woodland.

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11 July 2005