

# AGENDA ITEM 10

## APPENDIX I

2014/0190/PPP

# DESIGN STATEMENT

**DESIGN STATEMENT - MAINS OF CURR STEADING, NR GRANTOWN ON SPEY**

Date 10<sup>th</sup> April 2014

Client – Reidhaven Estates



VIEW OF EXISTING STEADING FROM THE SOUTH

## **BRIEF**

To facilitate redevelopment of an existing redundant farm steading and associated supported development including development of brownfield land and erection of a replacement house

## **LOCATION**

The site occupies an area of about 20,000m<sup>2</sup> or 5 acres with the main developable land lying in a north south orientation with land rising towards the west. It lies in an elevated position with clear views across the adjacent A95 to the surrounding countryside and to the Cairngorm Mountains beyond. It is approximately 300m north of the Nethybridge turn off, and there are currently 3 existing buildings which are as follows:

## **THE STEADING**

A large U shaped steading building located centrally on the site, comprising 2 substantial single storey wings either side of central section consisting of a central 2 storey structure with 1.5 and single storey side extensions linking to each single storey wing. The steading is built in stone with a pitched slate roof, and has been extended internally by the construction of a covered steel portal frame structure within the courtyard area. To the north there are the remains of a large timber outbuilding.

## **THE FARMHOUSE**

A traditional 1.5 storey stone and slate cottage with timber front porch, stone fronted gabled wall dormers, and 1.5 storey wing to rear.

## **THE BUNGALOW**

A single storey grey harled bungalow with slate pitched roof. The bungalow is located above and to the rear of the steading (West), with its main axis lying in a north south direction, and a projecting wing to the front (East). The external walls comprise a single skin of brickwork, with single glazed metal windows.

## **HISTORY**

The location of the existing substantial farm steading at Mains of Curr has for many years been problematic, in that it was separated from the rest of the farm and animals by a busy road with an access situated on a bend. The location with regards its use as a farm is no longer an issue, as a replacement agricultural building has been approved and built on the other side of the road at Croftnahaven in a more central location to service the farm. In addition, a further agricultural building, at this same location, has recently received planning approval. The steading is therefore entirely redundant for farm use.

A previous tenant investigated the possibility of developing the steading as a childrens play area with associated facilities, cafe etc., but was advised at the time that this was unlikely to be supported due to the increased traffic using the existing road entrances.

The existing farmhouse and bungalow are currently tenanted by estate workers.

## **BACKGROUND**

This steading as it currently stands is unlikely to find a purchaser, as it is seriously compromised by the land to the rear which has been built up to eaves level. This arrangement is not original. Indeed, we understand the ground was raised to provide road access to the 1940s bungalow to the rear. Prior to this, the land was either not built up, or slightly elevated. Nevertheless, the rear of the property is now entirely inaccessible and creates a serious damp issue for any potential developer. This seriously limits what can be achieved internally in terms of design and layout, and would demand an expensive detailing solution to provide a dry space for which one is unlikely to be able to provide any long term guarantees against damp.

Reidhaven Estates wish to be able to market the steading for sale as a residential development, and are willing to undertake extensive enabling work to make this possible. However, in order to fund this, they require to be able to further develop the site.

We believe further development is justifiable under Policy 22 for the development of brownfield sites, and Policy 23 Replacement houses.

If the steading were to prove 'undevelopable' because of the damp problem, and an inability to finance the enabling work, then the only logical alternative would be to demolish the steading and develop the site under policy 22 as rural brownfield land. The client does not wish to go down this route, as Mains of Curr steading is an important local landmark and well worthy of retention for redevelopment to residential use.

## **PREAPPLICATION**

Extensive discussion has taken place over the last year and a half with Katherine Donnachie of CNPA in order to clarify their position with regards this proposal. In summation, our understanding is as follows:

- i. The proposed site to the north of the existing steading is accepted as brownfield land under policy 22, however, the CNPA are concerned that the building should be subservient to the existing steading. The design is therefore a critical issue.
- ii. There is general support for the demolition of the existing bungalow, however, we require to submit justification for this.
- iii. The change of use for the steading to residential is fully supported. Enabling work to achieve this is likely to be viewed supportively providing it does not contravene any existing policies.

I would note the current application differs to that previously presented, in that the siting of the proposed new dwelling houses has been further developed, and the road layout has been amended. The latter is due to having obtained a detailed site level survey, which has identified that the original proposed road layout would have required an excessive amount of excavation to achieve.

Andrew Donaldson of Transport Scotland has been consulted with regards road access. He has agreed in principle to a new access being formed, to be as follows:

- i. the existing road access to the south is to be blocked off
- ii. a reduced Y value of 175m minimum as the visibility splay to the south
- iii. the junction is to be as layout 3 of DMRB Volume 6, Section 2 TD 41/95 with a 6m bellmouth

## THE PROPOSAL

The proposal is for outline planning permission for the following:

- a) Erect a single dwelling house on the brownfield site to north of the existing steading
- b) Demolish the existing bungalow and erect a new dwelling house to the west of the existing steading

A separate application will be made for the Change of use to residential for the Steading, should the current proposal be approved.

In order to achieve the above, Reidhaven Estates are prepared to undertake extensive and costly enabling work including:

- 1) Forming a new road junction
- 2) Forming a new access road
- 3) Extensive excavation of the ground to the rear of the steading in order to rehabilitate the building for residential use
- 4) Installation of a biodisc sewage treatment plant to serve the existing and proposed dwellings

## THE STEADING

Whilst the conversion of the steading to residential use is not part of the current application, its redevelopment is critically connected, as approval of this application will make redevelopment of the steading financially viable by providing funds to carry out all the associated enabling work.

We understand enabling development is not directly supported under the existing Cairngorms National Park Local Plan, however, development only takes place where it is likely to be economically viable. The conversion of the existing redundant steading is supported under Policy 27 Conversion and Reuse of Existing Traditional and Vernacular Buildings. In addition, whilst not listed, the steading is an important local landmark and very much **'contributes positively to the context and setting of the area'**. Therefore positive or even proactive support for redevelopment such as 'enabling development' should and can be justified.

Redevelopment of the steading is also in accordance with the primary aims of the National Park, in particular **'to conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the area'**. Furthermore, **'if, in relation to any matter, it appears to the CNPA there is conflict between the first aim and the others, the CNPA must give greater weight to the first aim'**. Therefore, we would argue that support for redevelopment of the steading through enabling

development can be justified, even where it may not be fully supported elsewhere, providing it can be seen to be conserving and enhancing the local cultural heritage, which this is. Notwithstanding the above, we believe the applications for a replacement house and a new house on a brownfield site are fully supported in their own right, by the existing Local Plan policies.

Fundamental to the viability of the conversion of the steading to residential use, is the removal of the ground to the rear of the building. This requires to be taken down to ground level and extended back to provide some amenity to the rear. The land is then to be graded back at no greater than 30°.

The removal of this land will remove any means of vehicular access to the existing bungalow and will undermine the foundations. The provision of a new vehicular access to the existing 1940s bungalow is not deemed financially justifiable. In view of this, and for further reasons outlined below, we require to demolish the existing bungalow and erect a new dwelling house.

The excavation of the ground to the rear of the existing steading will require the removal of some existing trees as indicated on the proposed site plan. These predominantly comprise birch, cherry and immature sycamore.

#### **PROPOSED REPLACEMENT HOUSE**

The erection of a replacement house can be supported under Policy 23 based on a number of criteria:

**a) *the existing house is demonstrated to be structurally unsound or incapable of rehabilitation***

- i. The foundations of the existing bungalow will be compromised by the removal of ground needed to rehabilitate the steading building
- ii. The formation of a new road access to a 1940s bungalow is not financially justifiable
- iii. The building has not been designed to relate to those around it, either in how it is located or its appearance. Neither is it in accord with the local vernacular. It has nothing whatsoever to recommend it.
- iv. The property is constructed of plaster on a single skin brick wall with external render finish. Without constant heating the building is damp and cold. Improvements could be made to the building fabric with some difficulty, but given the above, the expense is not justifiable

Viewed as a whole, and on the basis of the above, we believe the existing bungalow to be unworthy of rehabilitation. In addition, the work to rehabilitate the steading will make the bungalow structurally unsound. This is further supported in that an appropriate replacement house will *'enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the area'*.

**b) *the existing house is not a listed building***

The existing house is not listed

**c) *the new house is located to incorporate the footprint of the original house, unless an alternative adjacent site would minimise any negative environmental, social or economic effects of the development***

Given points a)iii and a)iv above it is proposed not to build the house in the same location or replicate the existing footprint.

There is an opportunity to build a new dwelling that relates to the buildings around it, both through its location and by style using elements of the local vernacular. In addition the new building can be designed to be efficient in its use of energy.

***d) the existing house has been vacant for at least ten years***

This is not the case

Through 3D modelling of the site, we have determined the best location for the replacement house to be approximately 11m south, and 1.5m east of the existing building. This location affords the new house open views between the farmhouse and steading to the hills beyond, and better relates to both existing buildings.

The proposed 3D block design shows a building with a 1.5 storey section running in an east west direction adjoined by a 1.5 storey section to the south. The building is L shaped, presenting the main spine of the building in a north south direction to take advantage of the views to the east, with the extended leg of the L facing back towards the rising ground to the west. The proposed building is proportioned exactly as the existing steading and farmhouse, with a depth of about 6m and a roof pitch of 45°. This is all in accordance with Policy 6 Landscape.

The building will provide an opportunity to create a low energy, carbon zero rated house. This could be achieved by building to Passivhaus standards or using high levels of insulation and low air permeability with a combination of technologies such as a log burning boiler, or photovoltaic cells with an air source heat pump.

Building finishes are envisaged as being a combination of locally used materials, primarily stone and vertically boarded timber with a slate roof. However, depending on the design, it may be appropriate to use corrugated aluminium for the roof and parts of the wall. Similarly roughcast could be used with stone surrounds for the windows.

We believe final choice of materials along with the exact design of house, should be a matter for detailed application and not the outline application being proposed here.

**PROPOSED NEW HOUSE**

The erection of a new house on a rural brownfield site is supported under Policy 22 Housing Development Outside Settlements.

**Developments for other new housing outside settlements will be permitted where:**

**c) The development is sited on rural brownfield land.**

The principal of development has already been accepted, however, we have been asked to demonstrate through design, that our proposal is acceptable. We would note that this is an application for Outline Planning Permission and not a detailed application. Therefore it is more appropriate that a detailed design be submitted as part of the application for Full Planning Permission. We have provided 3D modelling of the site, showing the location and massing of our proposed buildings. Thereafter, the exact design, and specific material

finishes should be a matter for detailed application and be treated separately to this application.

With regards the new dwelling house for the brownfield site, the CNPA have stated '*the design of the house is crucial and should ensure that it remains visually subservient to the steading buildings*'. Given the CNPA's comments regarding design, together with their response to a previously submitted design during pre-application discussions, showing a farmhouse type building not dissimilar to that existing to the south, the current proposal has been designed to fit in with the existing steading by appearing to be further outbuildings subservient to the main steading, forming a smaller courtyard area with an L shape, and proportioned as per the existing steading wings.

One should note the appearance of the existing steading will change substantially with the removal of the sheds in the internal courtyard, as what is currently visible from the road is a single long built up elevation. The pattern and rhythm of this will change, and adding a smaller L shaped building as shown in the 3D massing model will help emphasise the projecting wings of the existing steading. This is all in accordance with Policy 6 Landscape.

## **CONCLUSION**

Paving the way for the redevelopment of Mains of Curr Steading to residential use should be actively encouraged. Reidhaven Estates are prepared to invest both time and money in order to make this happen. However, before this can be achieved a significant amount of enabling work requires to be carried out. Approval of a new house on rural brownfield land, together with approval of a replacement house will make all this possible. In addition, it will replace an unsightly post war bungalow with something far more appropriate to both the site and the area, and significantly improve an existing road access, whilst removing an extremely dangerous one.

All of this is supported by the main aims of the National Park noted below. It is also supported by various policies noted in the Cairngorms National Park Local Plan including:

Policy 6 Landscape; Policy 22 Housing Outwith Settlements; Policy 23 Replacement Houses; and Policy 27 Conversion and Reuse of Existing Traditional and Vernacular Buildings, all as noted below and as discussed in detail above in this proposal, and as evidenced by the accompanying drawings.



**SITE PHOTOGRAPHS**



Approach to site from existing access off A95



View of existing steading from road



SW corner of steading showing road access to bungalow



Access road to bungalow level with rear eaves of steading



Existing bungalow to be demolished



View from SW of site towards nearby hills

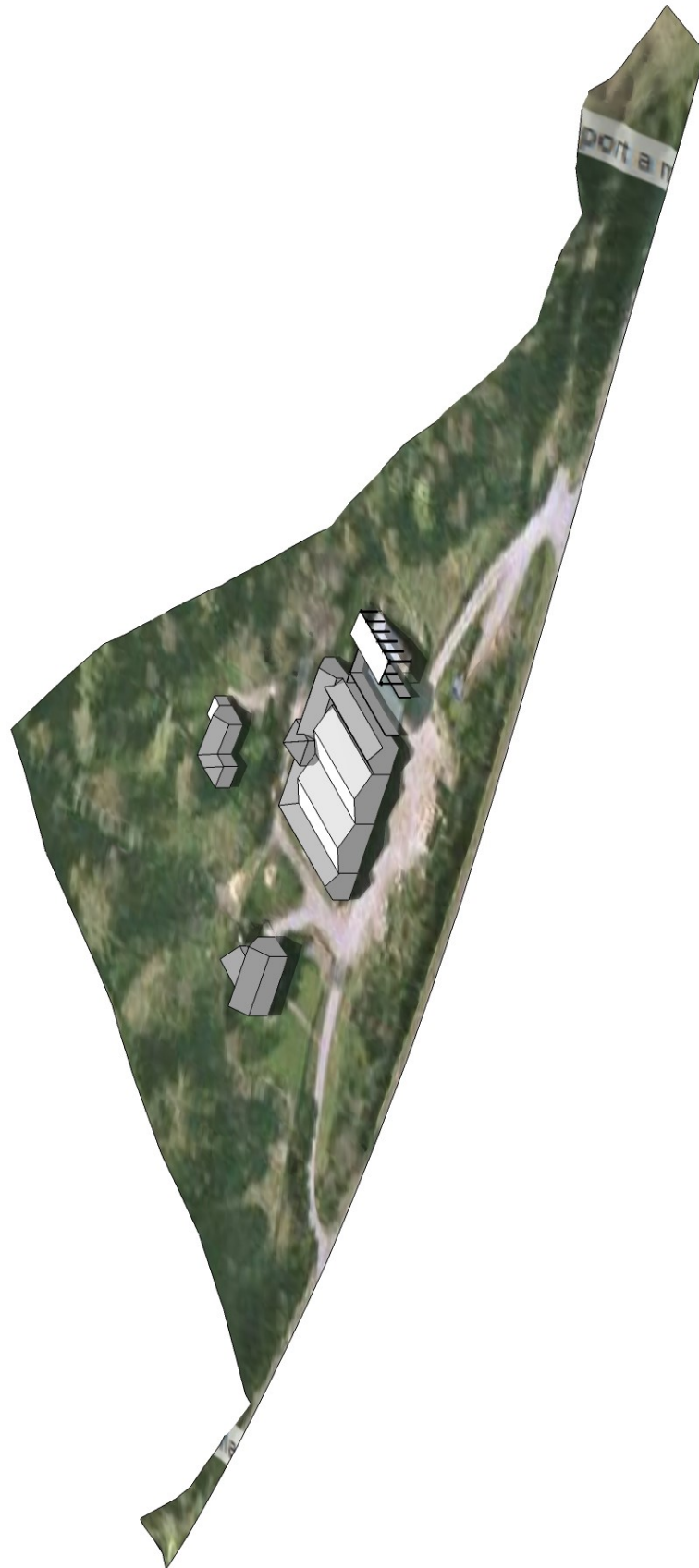


Brownfield site from NW looking SE

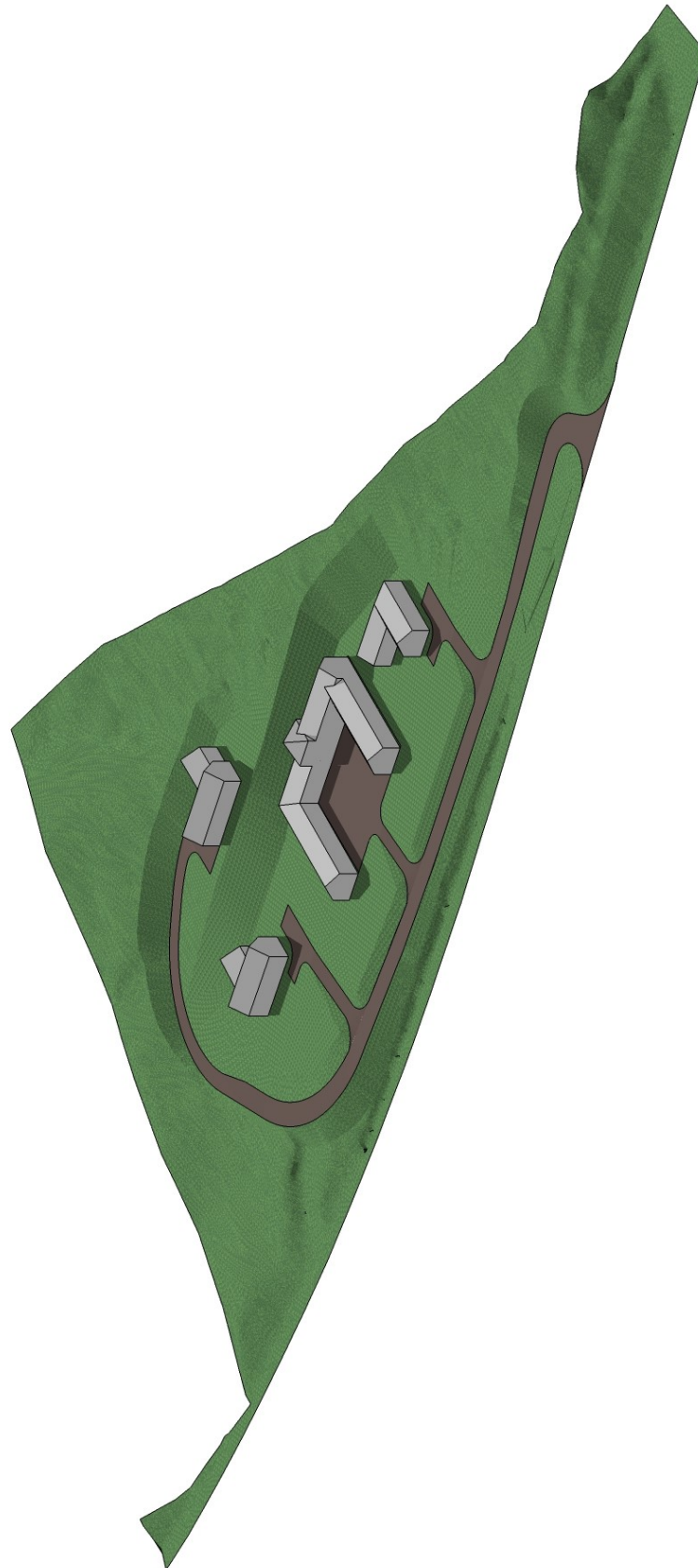


Brownfield site from East. Central roof structure missing due to storm damage

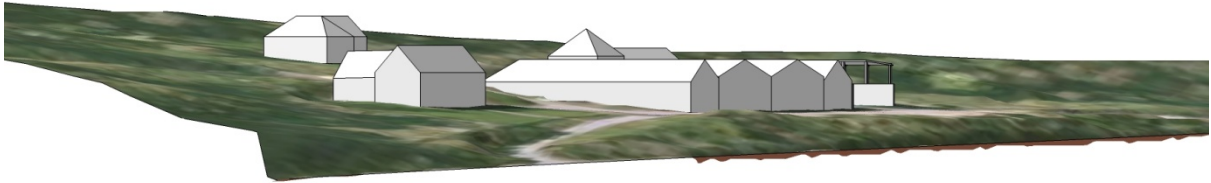
**3D IMAGES OVERLEAF**



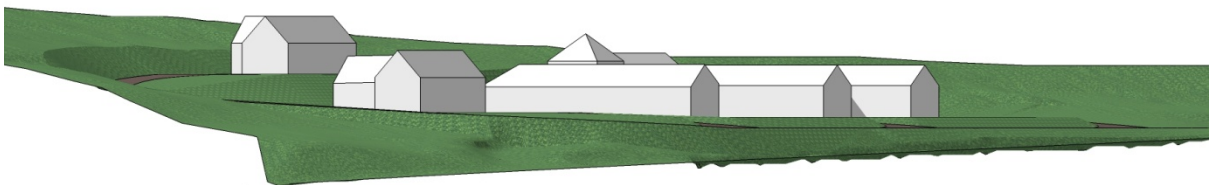
View of existing from above and from North East



View of proposed from above and from North East

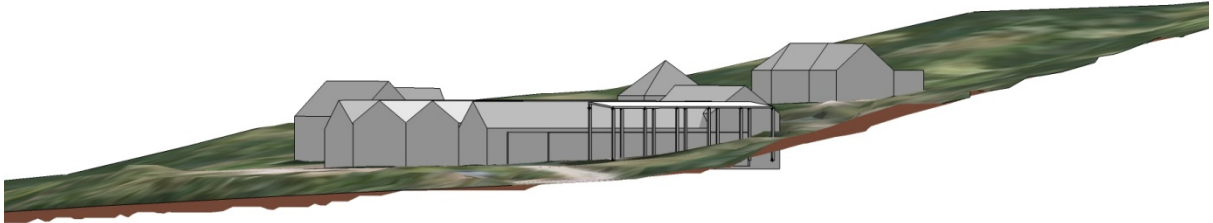


View of existing from south along road

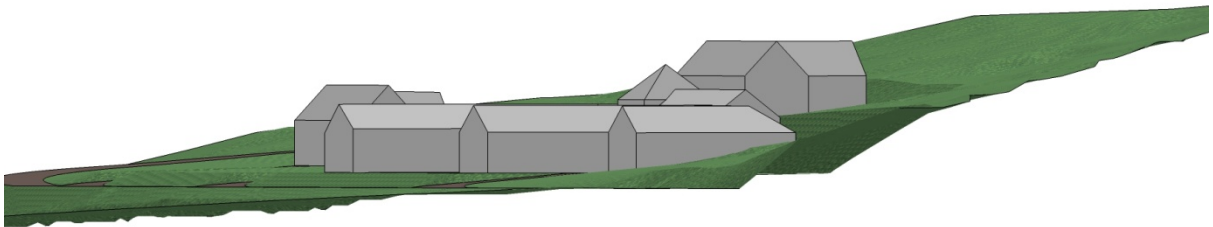


View of proposed from south along road





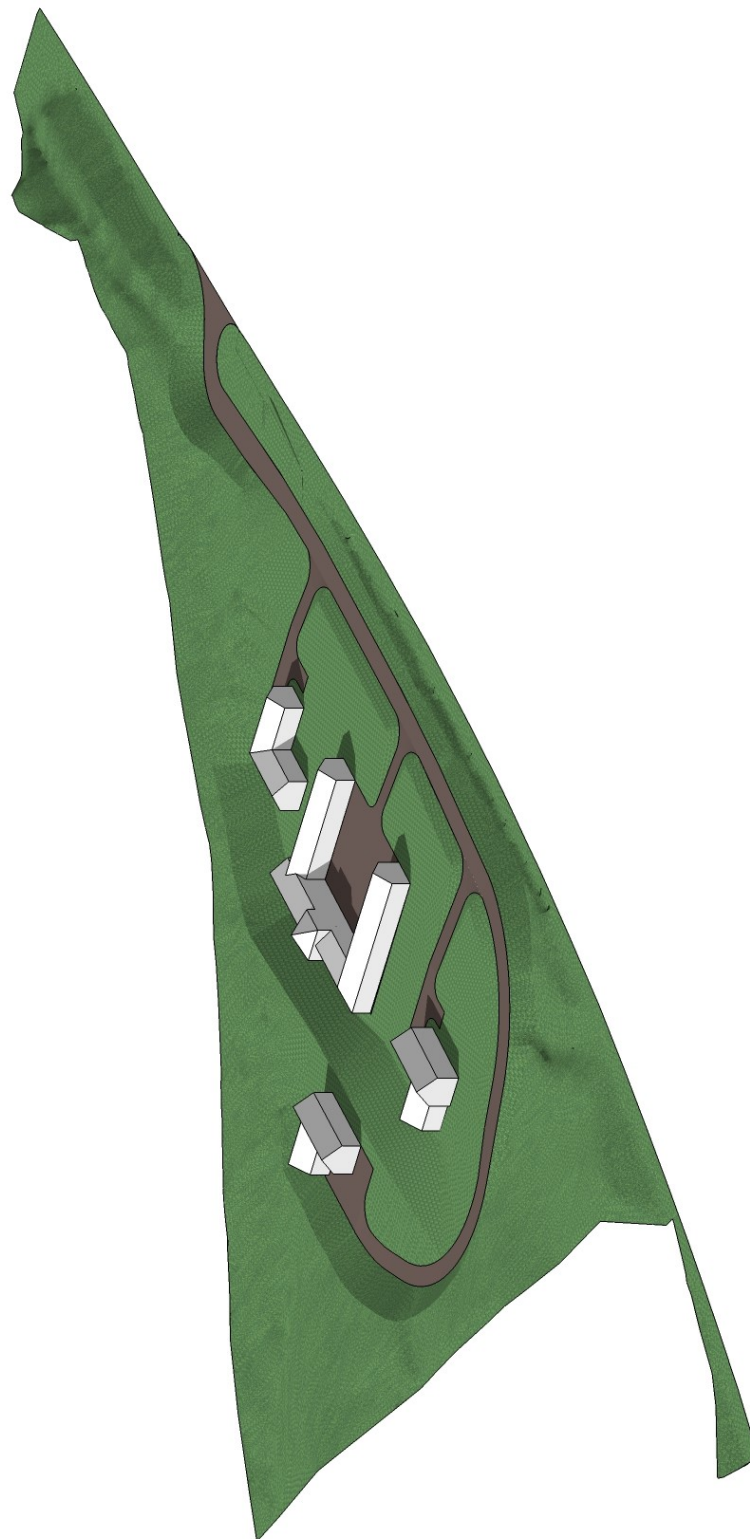
View of existing from north at existing access



View of proposed from north at same position as above



View of existing from above and from South East



View of proposed from above and from South East

## **POLICIES**

### **CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK CRITERIA**

The aims of the National Park are stated as follows:

- a) To conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the area
- b) To promote sustainable use of the natural resources of the area
- c) To promote understanding and enjoyment (including enjoyment in the form of recreation) of the special qualities of the area by the public
- d) To promote sustainable economic and social development of the area's communities.

Specific policies applicable in relation to this application under the Cairngorm National Park Local Plan comprise the following:

#### **Policy 6 Landscape**

There will be a presumption against any development that does not complement and enhance the landscape character of the Cairngorms National Park, and in particular, the setting of the proposed development. Proposed development that does not complement and enhance the landscape character of the Park and the setting of the proposed development will be permitted only where:

- a) any significant adverse effects on the landscape character of the Park are clearly outweighed by social or economic benefits of national importance; and
- b) all the adverse effects on the setting of the proposed development have been minimised and mitigated through appropriate siting, layout, scale, design and construction to the satisfaction of the planning authority.

#### **Policy 12 Water Resources**

#### **Policy 15 Renewable Energy Generation**

#### **Policy 16 Design Standards for Development**

Design of all development will seek, where appropriate, to:

- a) minimise the effect of the development on climate change;
- b) 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 use of materials;
- c) use materials and landscaping that will complement the setting of the development ;
- d) demonstrate sustainable use of resources (including the minimisation of energy, waste and water usage) throughout construction, within the future maintenance arrangements, and for any decommissioning which may be necessary;
- e) enable the storage, segregation and collection of recyclable materials and make provision for composting;
- f) reduce the need to travel;
- g) protect the amenity enjoyed by neighbouring properties and all proposals will be designed to help create environments that can be enjoyed by everyone.
- h) accord with the design standards and palette of materials set out in the Sustainable Design Guide and any other supplementary guidance produced relating to design for new developments.

All proposals must be accompanied by a design statement which sets out how the requirements of the policy have been met.

### **Policy 18 Developer Contributions**

### **Policy 22 Housing Developments Outside Settlements**

Other housing outside settlements

Developments for other new housing outside settlements will be permitted where:

c) The development is sited on rural brownfield land.

4.62 The reuse of existing buildings on the site should also be considered and discounted before new buildings will be permitted.

### **Policy 23 Replacement Houses**

There will be a presumption against the replacement of an existing house with a new house unless:

a) the existing house is demonstrated to be structurally unsound or incapable of rehabilitation

b) the existing house is not a listed building

c) the new house is located to incorporate the footprint of the original house, unless an alternative adjacent site would minimise any negative environmental, social or economic effects of the development

d) the existing house has been vacant for at least ten years.

4.65 The policy is intended to allow for the replacement of existing houses which .... cannot be rehabilitated.

### **Policy 27 Conversion and Reuse of Existing Traditional and Vernacular Buildings**

Developments proposals for the conversion of existing traditional and vernacular buildings will be permitted where the following criteria are met:

a) the building is redundant for its original use, and it can be demonstrated that it is unlikely to have a commercial or economic future in its current form; and

b) the proposal is designed to maintain the style and character of the original building in terms of form, scale, materials and detailing, where they contribute positively to the context and setting of the area.

### **Supplementary Planning Guidance**

#### **Sustainable Design Guide**