
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

Title: REPORT ON CALLED-IN PLANNING APPLICATION

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DEVELOPMENT PROPOSED: ERECTION OF TEMPORARY WEATHER CANOPY, AUCHTAVAN COTTAGE, GLEN FEARDAR, BRAEMAR (FULL PLANNING PERMISSION & LISTED BUILDING CONSENT)

REFERENCE: 05/448/CP & 05/430/CP

APPLICANT: BRAEMAR COMMUNITY COUNCIL

DATE CALLED-IN: 4 NOVEMBER 2005

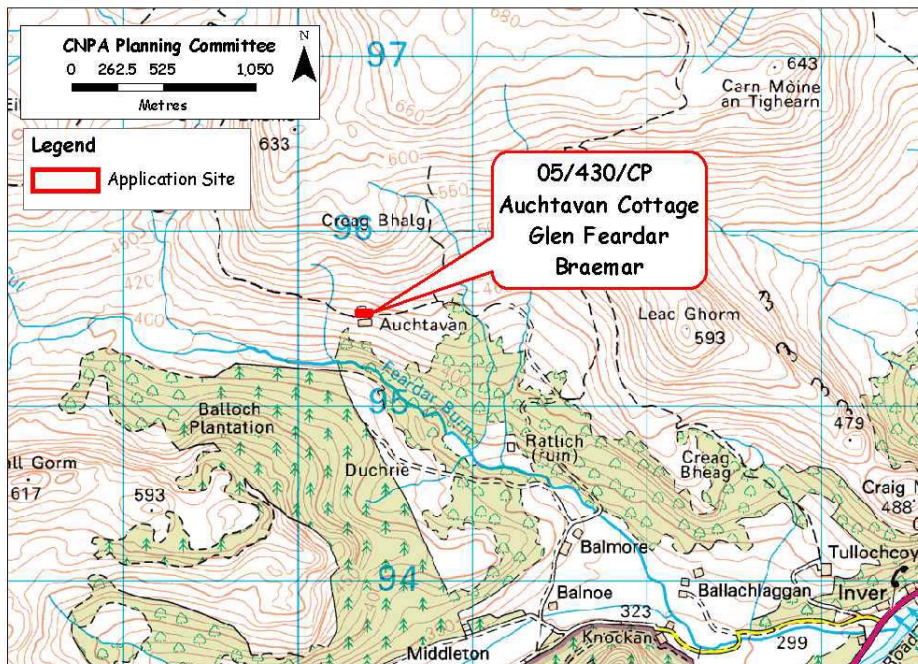


Fig. 1 - Location Plan

SITE DESCRIPTION AND PROPOSAL

1. Auchtavan lies in a remote spot approximately 3 kilometres north west of Inver on Upper Deeside. The track leading up to the cottage goes from Balmore to Auchtavan through an area of birch woodland and open moorland. The site includes an existing cottage which is still used and a mill building.



Fig 2 Auchtavan Cottage showing weather damage to left end.

2. This report covers both planning and listed building consent and relates to Auchtavan Cottage which lies immediately to the north of the other two buildings. The buildings are part of what was once a much larger settlement group. Auchtavan cottage is the oldest of the 3 buildings, possibly of late 18th/early 19th century origin. The building is a simple croft house with internal measurements of approximately 4 by 12.5 metres and was once perhaps split into two sections with a byre and living area.
3. In historic terms the building is very important and was identified by park staff last year as being one of the few remaining examples in Scotland of its type. The building has subsequently been 'A' listed by Historic Scotland which means that it is of national importance. The cruck framed structure of the house is evident as is the hanging lum and turf/heather finish. Many years ago a corrugated iron roof had been placed over the structure for protection. Some of the protective sheeting has now been blown off and it is becoming imperative that a solution is found to protect the building in the short term.

4. These proposals have been prioritised because of the need to provide protection for the structure as quickly as possible due to recent poor weather conditions. What is proposed is a shelter for the building made of metal sheeting which will be fixed in place by tubular purlins to be cemented in the ground with ballast blocks to provide further weighting for the structure. The apex of the structure would be 1 metre above the ridgeline of the cottage and have a demountable roof lid. A gap between the structure and the cottage on all sides will allow for ventilation and also allow for inspection and future restoration work
5. The application is being put forward by Braemar Community Council and Invercauld Estate has confirmed that they are happy for the Council to act on their behalf as agents with this proposal. Funding is being sought for the project and Historic Scotland is also likely to contribute.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN CONTEXT

6. **Policy Env\18 of the Aberdeenshire Local Plan** considers that all buildings of special architectural or historic interest shall be protected against all works which would have a detrimental effect on their listed character, integrity, or setting. The council will encourage the protection maintenance, enhancement, active use and conservation of listed buildings. Alterations and extensions to listed buildings must be of the highest quality, respect the original structure in terms of setting, scale, design and materials.
7. **Policy Env \21 Local Cultural Sites and Vernacular Buildings** considers that development that would have an adverse effect on local cultural sites will be refused, unless the developer takes satisfactory steps to mitigate negative development impacts. Development that would involve the unnecessary demolition or insensitive alteration of vernacular buildings that contribute to the character or amenity of the surrounding area will be refused.

CONSULTATIONS

8. **Historic Scotland** note that the Historic Building Inspector discussed the proposals with the applicant's consulting engineers and the CNPA. Auchtavan Cottage was listed category 'A' in February 2005 for the quality of its rare, surviving vernacular features. These include a cruck-framed roof structure, with heather and thatch roofing under corrugated iron; rubble dry stone walls with some lime mortar, and a largely intact hanging lum of vertical timber boarding over an open hearth. Although in a derelict and perilous condition, the exceptional quality of the features, provides nationally important surviving evidence of the early traditional Scottish small house. The restoration of this cottage would form part of a potential interpretation and educational facility for the

appreciation of early farmtoun life and vernacular building construction in the Cairngorms National Park. The restoration work itself would provide an opportunity for vernacular building research and for hands on training in traditional building skills.

9. The proposed temporary canopy, designed by a renowned conservation engineer, would assist with urgent stabilisation work and enable proper investigation and repair to be carried out with essential weather protection for such an exposed location. The Inspectorate therefore, has no objection to the proposal.

REPRESENTATIONS

10. No representations have been received.

APPRAISAL

11. The key issue with this application is the negative, or positive impacts of the proposal upon the historic and cultural importance of this newly 'A' listed building.
12. It is clear that the building has been suffering as a result of damage from the weather and a key factor is the damage done to the existing corrugated roof at one end of the building that has been progressively removed by wind and rain. The building has been A listed which means that it is of national importance. The weather canopy is being proposed as a direct way of addressing the continuing decline of the building as a temporary measure to protect the building while a longer term plan for its protection and restoration, or part restoration is being worked out. A consulting engineer who has a considerable track record in dealing with historic structures has provided the detailed plans for the canopy and the scheme is put forward by the Braemar Community Council.
13. Such a structure would perhaps not be acceptable in landscape terms if it was intended on a permanent basis. However, this scheme is intended to provide protection to a building of national importance in what is becoming an emergency situation. This is why the proposal has been brought before the Planning Committee quickly for determination. Any landscape impacts from the structure would be of a temporary nature and the protection of the building would contribute to the cultural heritage of the area and the historic character of this landscape in the longer term.

14. The weather canopy is of a temporary nature. Plans for restoration are not at a detailed stage yet but it is understood that the requirement for the canopy may be up to December 2007. As mentioned above such a structure would not normally be granted a permanent consent. However, a condition on the report specifies a three year permission. This gives more flexibility than allowing a permission up until December 2007 which is only a very tentative date at this stage for the removal of the canopy. I would point out that this does not preclude the applicants from seeking an extension to this period by way of a further application when this consent expires. Subject to this I have no hesitation in recommending permission.
15. Because of the high listing of the building any intention to grant the application must be notified to Historic Scotland who has an opportunity to call the proposal in. However, given that Historic Scotland is actively supporting the scheme this is likely to be a formality.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE AIMS OF THE NATIONAL PARK

Conserve and Enhance the Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Area

16. The erection of the canopy may have some temporary landscape impacts. However, in terms of cultural heritage the canopy would provide protection for a building of national importance. The future restoration of the building would contribute to both the cultural heritage but also the wider historic value of settlement in the landscape of this part of the Cairngorms.

Promote Sustainable Use of Natural Resources

17. The proposal is not directly relevant to this aim as it is not known where the materials will be sourced from.

Promote Understanding and Enjoyment of the Area

18. In the longer term, the proposal would contribute to the understanding and enjoyment of the area. There are embryonic plans to use the building as an interpretation facility, both of its own historic character and features and also to interpret early farm life. The proposal could in the long term contribute strongly to this aim. Future restoration work may also help to provide training in traditional building methods.

Promote Sustainable Economic and Social Development of the Area

19. The application is in effect a Community Council proposal and the Council are working together with historic bodies to rescue the building. As such the scheme is contributing towards the social development of

the area and could also prove to be an important educational tool in the future for local schools and other organisations with an interest.

RECOMMENDATION

20. That Members of the Committee support a recommendation to: **GRANT FULL PLANNING PERMISSION AND GRANT LISTED BUILDING CONSENT** for the erection of a temporary weather canopy at Auchtavan Cottage, Glen Feardar, Braemar, subject to the following conditions:-
- I. The consent is for a temporary 3 year period from the date of this decision notice, after this time the canopy and all traces of it must be removed from the site to the satisfaction of the Cairngorms National Park Authority acting as Planning Authority.
 - II. Prior to the canopy being erected full details of the colour finish of the canopy shall be submitted to and approved by the Cairngorms National Park Authority acting as Planning Authority.

ADVICE NOTE

Please note that condition 1 does not preclude a further application to extend the time period for the canopy to be in place should this period need to be extended.

Please note that Historic Scotland will be notified of this intention to grant permission before any decision notices are issued.

Andrew Tait

8th December 2005

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