
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

Title: REPORT ON CALLED-IN PLANNING APPLICATION

**Case Officer : MATTHEW TAYLOR
(PLANNING OFFICER,
DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT)**

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSED: Alterations, Extension and Refurbishment of Hotel. Fife Arms, Braemar.

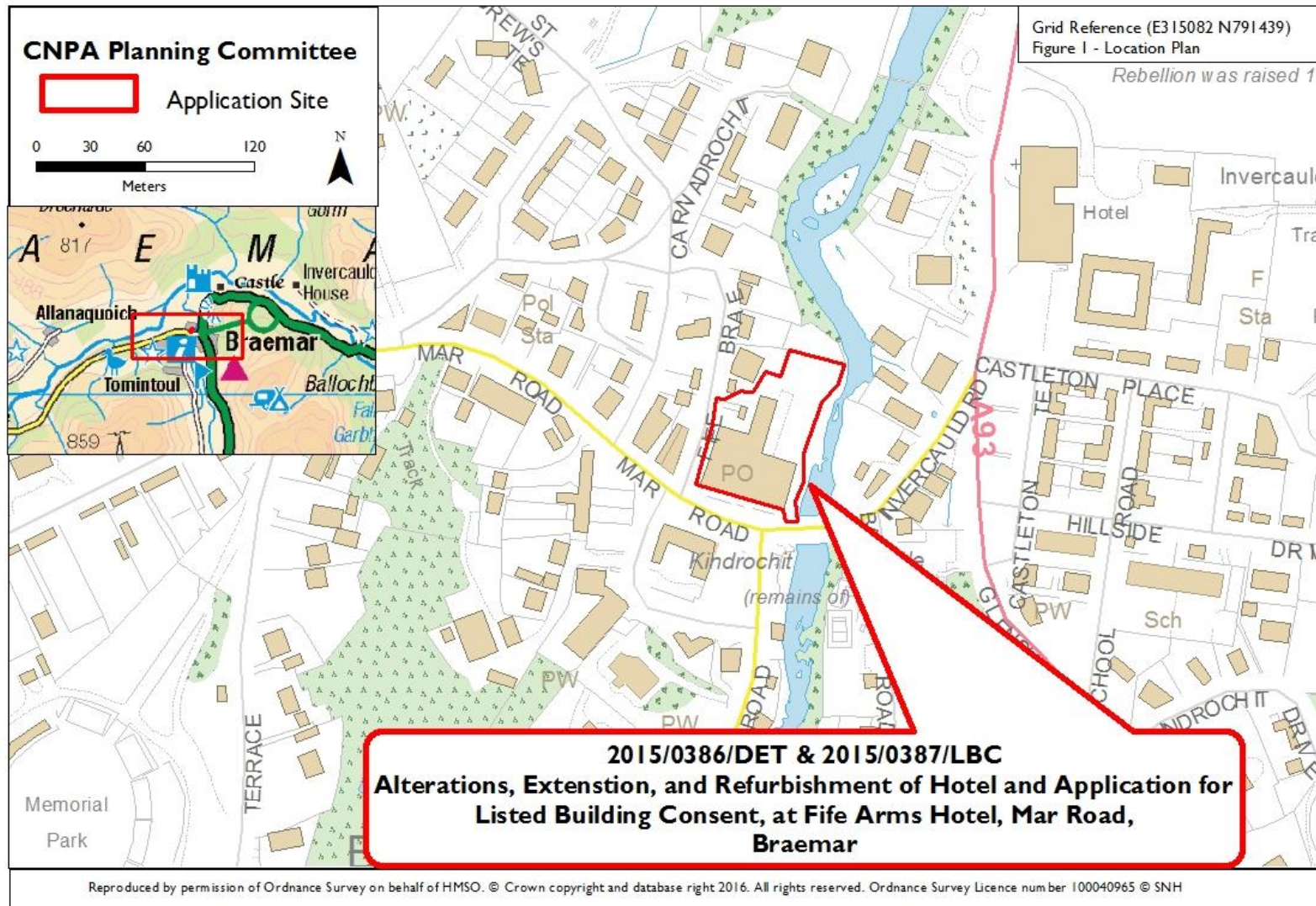
REFERENCE: 2015/0386/DET & 2015/0387/LBC

APPLICANT: Highlands Hospitality Ltd

DATE CALLED-IN: 14 December 2015

REASON FOR CALL IN: The proposal involves the refurbishment, internal and external alterations, and extension to the Fife Arms in Braemar. The Fife Arms is a substantial and imposing B listed building originally constructed in the late 19th century and located within the heart of Braemar. The Fife Arms makes a significant contribution to the character and appearance of the Braemar conservation area and is of regional importance as recognised by its B listing. The proposal is Type I being for listed building consent involving major internal and external changes with some part demolition as part of the proposals.

RECOMMENDATION: APPROVAL SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS



SITE DESCRIPTION, PROPOSAL AND HISTORY

- I. The drawings and documents associated with this application are listed below and are available on the Cairngorms National Park Authority website unless noted otherwise:

<http://www.eplanningcnpa.co.uk/online-applications/#searchApplications>

Title	Drawing Number	Date on Plan	Date Received
Design and Access Statement			16 December 2015
Bat Survey Main Building			16 December 2015
Bat Survey Kitchen Extension and Bothy			16 December 2015
Traffic Management Plan & Construction Method Statement		January 2016	20 January 2016
Photographic Survey			25 January 2016
Protection Measures	Protect-01	22 January 2016	25 January 2016
Protection Measures	Protect-02	22 January 2016	25 January 2016
Protection Measures	Protect-03	22 January 2016	25 January 2016
Protection Measures	Protect-04	22 January 2016	25 January 2016
First Floor Plan Photo Survey	Photo-01	25 January 2016	25 January 2016
Ground Floor Plan Photo Survey	Photo-02	25 January 2016	25 January 2016
Species Protection Plan (Bat)		13 December 2015	20 January 2016
Location Plan	554_100 A	18 November 2015	16 December 2016
Site Plan	101 A	18 November 2015	16 December 2016
Detail Elevations	336	18 November 2015	16 December 2016
Lower Ground Floor Survey Plan	120	23 October 2015	16 December 2016
Ground Floor Survey Plan	121	23 October 2015	16 December 2016
First Floor Survey Plan	122	23 October 2015	16 December 2016
Second Floor Survey Plan	123	23 October 2015	16 December 2016

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Attic Survey Plan	124	28 August 2015	16 December 2016
Survey South Elevation	130	23 October 2015	16 December 2016
Survey East Elevation	131	23 October 2015	16 December 2016
Survey West Elevation	132	23 October 2015	16 December 2016
Managers House Survey Elevations	133	23 October 2015	16 December 2016
Survey Section	140	23 October 2015	16 December 2016
Survey Section	141	23 October 2015	16 December 2016
Survey Section	142	23 October 2015	16 December 2016
Survey Section	143	23 October 2015	16 December 2016
Lower Ground Floor Plan	320 A	18 November 2015	16 December 2016
Ground Floor Plan	321 A	18 November 2015	16 December 2016
First Floor Plan	322 A	18 November 2015	16 December 2016
Second Floor Plan	323 A	18 November 2015	16 December 2016
Attic Floor Plan	324 A	18 November 2015	16 December 2016
Roof Plan	325 A	18 November 2015	16 December 2016
Lower Ground Floor Demolition Plan	230	23 October 2015	16 December 2016
Ground Floor Demolition Plan	221	23 October 2015	16 December 2016
First Floor Demolition Plan	222 A	18 November 2016	16 December 2016
Second Floor Demolition Plan	223 A	18 November 2016	16 December 2016
Attic Demolition Plan	224 A	18 November 2016	16 December 2016
Demolition South Elevation	230	23 October 2015	16 December 2016
Demolition East Elevation	231	23 October 2015	16 December 2016
Demolition West Elevation	232	23 October 2015	16 December 2016

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Managers House Demolition Elevations	233	23 October 2015	16 December 2016
Demolition Section	240	23 October 2015	16 December 2016
Demolition Section	241 A	18 November 2015	16 December 2016
Demolition Section	242	23 October 2015	16 December 2016
Demolition Section	243	23 October 2015	16 December 2016
Proposed South Elevation	330 A	18 November 2016	16 December 2016
Proposed East Elevation	331	23 October 2015	16 December 2016
Proposed West Elevation	332 A	18 November 2016	16 December 2016
New Function Space Building Elevations	333 A	18 November 2016	16 December 2016
Courtyard Internal Elevation	334 A	18 November 2016	16 December 2016
Gas Tank Screen	335	23 October 2015	16 December 2016
Detail Elevations	337	23 October 2015	16 December 2016
Proposed Section AA	340 A	18 November 2016	16 December 2016
Proposed Section BB	341 A	18 November 2016	16 December 2016
Proposed Section CC	342 A	18 November 2016	16 December 2016
Proposed Section DD	343 A	18 November 2016	16 December 2016
Proposed Section EE	344 A	18 November 2016	16 December 2016
Proposed Section FF	345 A	18 November 2016	16 December 2016
Proposed Section GG	346 A	18 November 2016	16 December 2016
Proposed Sections HH JJ KK	347 A	18 November 2016	16 December 2016
Proposed Section LL	348 A	18 November 2016	16 December 2016
Proposed Section MM	349 A	18 November 2016	16 December 2016
Proposed Section NN	350 A	18 November 2016	16 December 2016

Conceptual Sketches	360	23 October 2015	16 December 2016
Conceptual Sketches	361	23 October 2015	16 December 2016
Views of Courtyard	362	23 October 2015	16 December 2016
Views of Courtyard Distillery and Fog House	363		

Site Description

2. The Fife Arms Hotel is located within Braemar fronting Mar Road, with the Clunie Water to the east, Fife Brae to the west, and Braemar Mews to the south.
3. The hotel is located within the Braemar Conservation Area which gained 'Outstanding' Status in 1997. The conservation area includes the large hotels (including the Fife Arms); the churches originally associated with the two earlier settlements, and their respective halls and contains almost the whole of the Braemar settlement.
4. The Fife Arms is an imposing B Listed Building with a notable presence within the settlement of Braemar. The Historic Environment Scotland statement of special interest describes the Fife Arms as a large and highly distinctive part of the streetscape in Braemar. It dominates with its imposing scale and displays many of the traditional architectural characteristics of the area with its timber bargeboards, pink and grey granite and its multi gabled principle elevation. Its distinctive regional style is also displayed by the Aberdeen-bonded stonework.
5. The building is evidence of the expansion of the tourist trade in Braemar in the wake of Queen Victoria's visits and purchase of Balmoral, and the coming of the Railway to the area. It is therefore important evidence of the social history of the area.

Development Proposal

6. The proposed works include internal re-modelling and refurbishment of the existing staff/back of house, public, and guest accommodation; removal of later structural additions most notably including the felt flat roof kitchen block; link to managers house, and their replacement with new structures such as the 'heather roof' courtyard, and new building additions to provide additional function space and a new lift tower adjacent to an existing tower to the rear of the building. As much of the work would see replacement of existing structures, the footprint of the Hotel would increase by just 143sqm. The proposal also includes general external refurbishment including minor alterations.
7. A selection of plans and illustrations taken from the extensive submission are attached in **Appendix I** of this report and serve to show the extent of the taking down of existing later additions and the proposed replacement, with most

internal refurbishment being to rooms that have been subject to earlier 'modernisation'. The main 'public' rooms containing historic features would see some remodelling, most notably the inclusion of a wall to create additional rooms (in essence the reinstatement of an earlier arrangement) and setting forward of the rear wall of the main bar area.

8. The landscaping of the grounds does not form part of the proposal, and the earlier proposal for a distillery which was included in the public consultation is not being taken forward under the current application.
9. It is important to note that the applicant does not seek permission for a change of use of the building. The principle use of the building shall remain as a Hotel and any permission granted for this proposal would not permit a change of use to occur.

Site History

10. There are no recent planning permissions recorded for the site. However, the application is accompanied by a design statement outlining the history of the building. The statement outlines the history of the hotel which was originally constructed by the Duke of Fife in the late 19th Century with further works carried out in the 1890s and 1900s. The photographs contained within the statement demonstrate that the hotel has been subject to rapid and often dramatic phases of redevelopment through the early part of the 20th century whilst maintaining a well-balanced and visually cohesive presence within the settlement.
11. Unfortunately, the hotels 'modernisation' continued with less sensitive late 20th century additions, mainly to the rear of the building and including the felt flat roof kitchen/back of house accommodation, pend roof extension, and enclosed staircase tower. These were added prior to the building being listed on the 22nd February 1991.
12. Prior to the submission of the current applications, a number of public consultation events have been held in and around the village of Braemar. These were intended to inform stakeholders and other interested parties as to the nature of the project and the nature of the alterations being proposed. These included the construction of a 'bothy' structure at the Braemar Gathering, and a temporary photographic exhibition in the ground level windows of the Fife Arms. The consultations were ongoing from January to November 2015.
13. Whilst subject to ongoing alterations over the years the hotel has been in continuous operation since opening until the recent closure as part of the current refurbishments.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN CONTEXT

National Policy

14. **Scottish Planning Policy** (SPP, revised 2014) sets out national planning policies that reflect Scottish Ministers priorities for the operation of the planning system and for the development and use of land. Under planning law, planning applications must be determined according to the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The content of SPP is a material consideration in planning decisions that carries significant weight. The SPP promotes consistency in the application of policy across Scotland while allowing sufficient flexibility to reflect local circumstances.
15. The SPP sits alongside four other Scottish Government planning policy documents:
 - 1) The National Planning Framework (NPF) which provides the statutory framework for Scotland's long term spatial development. The NPF sets out the Scottish Government's spatial development policies for the next 20 to 30 years;
 - 2) Creating Places, the policy statement on architecture and place, containing the Scottish Government's policies and guidance on the importance of architecture and design;
 - 3) Designing Streets, a policy statement putting street design at the centre of place making. It contains policies and guidance on the design of new or existing streets and their construction, adoption and maintenance; and
 - 4) Circulars, which contain policy on the implementation of legislation or procedures.
16. **Scottish Historic Environment Policy*** (SHEP December 2011) sets out Scottish Ministers' policies for the historic environment, provides greater policy direction for Historic Environment Scotland and provides a framework that informs the day-to-day work of a range of organisations that have a role and interest in managing the historic environment. These include the Scottish Government, local authorities and the range of bodies that is accountable to Scottish Ministers, including Historic Environment Scotland. The SHEP complements and has the same authority as the Scottish Planning Policy and other relevant Ministerial policy documents. The SHEP is a relevant document in the statutory planning, Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) processes.

* The Historic Environment Scotland Act 2014 ("the 2014 Act") created Historic Environment Scotland and amended statutory processes relating to the historic environment. The SHEP has not been updated to reflect the creation of Historic Environment Scotland or the associated changes in process; it should therefore be read in conjunction with other legislation and regulations, as well as the Historic Environment Circular 1.

Strategic Policy

Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan (2012-2017)

17. The Cairngorms National Park Plan sets out the vision and overarching strategy for managing the Park and provides focus and priorities at a time of limited financial resources. The Plan also provides a strategic context for the Local Development Plan and shows how the four aims of the National Park can be achieved together. It sets out the strategic direction and priorities for the Park.
18. Three long term outcomes for the Park are set out as follows:
- 1) A sustainable economy supporting thriving businesses and communities;
 - 2) A special place for people and nature with natural and cultural heritage enhanced; and
 - 3) People enjoying the park through outstanding visitor and learning experiences.

These outcomes address the interaction of the three main characteristics of the National Park these being that the Park is an internationally important area for nature conservation; a fragile rural economy, and an internationally known tourism destination. Recognising the relationship of these outcomes is at the heart of the National Park. A series of work programmes to help deliver the outcomes is set out in the Plan.

Local Plan Policy

Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan (2015)

19. All new development proposals require to be assessed in relation to policies contained in the adopted Local Development Plan. The full wording of policies can be found at:
- <http://cairngorms.co.uk/uploads/documents/Park%20Authority/Planning/LDPI5.pdf>
20. Key policies relevant to the proposed development are summarised below:
21. **Policy 2: Supporting Economic Growth** seeks to support developments that enhance formal and informal recreation and leisure facilities; tourism and leisure based business activities and attractions etc. provided there are no adverse environmental impacts, it extends the core tourist season, and makes a positive contribution to the experience of visitors.
22. **Policy 3: Sustainable Design** requires development proposals to demonstrate how the proposal has been designed in accordance with sustainable design principles and to respect the design, massing, proportions, materials and general visual appearance of the area.

23. **Policy 4: Natural Heritage** recognises that key to the long term success of the Park is the protection of habitats and species. The policy also recognises that many of the special habitats and species of the Cairngorms need active management to continue to thrive. The policy will ensure that development conserves and enhances the outstanding natural heritage of the Cairngorms National Park. It offers the necessary level of protection from adverse development and enables enhancement.
24. **Policy 5: Landscape** presumes against any development that does not conserve and enhance the landscape character and special qualities of the Park.
25. **Policy 9: Cultural Heritage** seeks to ensure that development affecting a site, feature, or use of land of local or wider or cultural historic significance or its setting will protect or conserve and enhance the feature and its setting; or take reasonable measures to avoid, minimise and mitigate any adverse effects.

Supplementary Guidance

26. The CNPA has prepared a suite of Supplementary Guidance (SG) which is part of the Local Development Plan and provides more detail about how to comply with the policies. There is also non-statutory Planning Guidance to help support the delivery of the Plan. Key guidance:
27. Supporting Economic Growth (Non Statutory Planning Guidance)_recognising that the tourism and leisure sector is vital to the wider economy of the National Park.
28. Sustainable Design (Non Statutory Planning Guidance) provides further information and detail on how to comply with Policy 3: Sustainable Design in the Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan 2015.
29. Natural Heritage (Supplementary Guidance) provides further information and detail on how to comply with Policy 4: Natural Heritage in the Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan 2015. It forms part of the Local Development Plan and carries that weight in decision making.
30. Landscape (Non Statutory Planning Guidance) provides further information and detail on how to comply with Policy 5: Landscape in the Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan 2015.
31. Cultural Heritage (Non Statutory Planning Guidance) provides further information and detail on how to comply with Policy 9: Cultural Heritage in the Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan 2015.

CONSULTATIONS

32. **Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH)** consider that the proposal could be progressed with appropriate mitigation as follows:

33. River Dee Special Area of Conservation (SAC). Measures to prevent sedimentation or pollution entering the Clunie Water must be conditioned to any consent and detailed in a Construction Method Statement (CMS). If site specific measures minimise the risks then the development would not likely have a significant effect on the SAC and an appropriate assessment would not be required. SNH do not wish to be consulted on the detail of the CMS and are content that this is assessed by the Council and/or SEPA.
34. European Protected Species (EPS) Bats. Provided the surveyor can provide a robust justification for why they consider this level of survey is sufficient to fully assess the use of the building by bats, then we would consider this level of survey acceptable for a licence application. However, in order to assess a licence application we would also require:
 - 1) A detailed species protection plan (SPP) which accurately describe the works affecting bats and the impact (offences) on each individual roost. The ecologist has identified that as well as non-breeding pipistrelle and brown long-eared roosts, a pipistrelle maternity roost will be affected. We would need confirmation of which species of pipistrelle they consider to be the maternity roost, or confirmation if both species are considered breeding.
 - 2) The SPP will also need to provide details on agreed mitigation and compensation for works affecting bats. Whilst the survey for the kitchen extensions and bothy provides details on *proposed* compensation for the loss of 2 non-breeding roosts of common pipistrelle bats, the survey of the main building does not provide sufficient details on agreed mitigation and compensation. This information is required to allow an assessment
35. CNPA sought additional information to address the above and the applicant provided further information in support of the EPS survey along with a Species Protection Plan. In response SNH confirm that the survey effort is justified and the level of survey is acceptable for a licence application, furthermore SNH confirm that the SPP is acceptable, along with the bat survey report for a licence application and that a licence is likely to be issued.
36. **Historic Environment Scotland (HES)** consider that the proposals do not raise issues of national significance, so they confirm that they do not object.
37. HES welcome the submission of this scheme to renovate and revitalise the B-listed Fife Arms Hotel. Having reviewed the component parts of the proposals and considered the content of the Design Statement, HES consider the interventions have been well-considered and will not have any significant adverse impacts. The parts of the building to be removed, the majority being later extensions, do not contribute to the special interest of the listed building. HES also have no concerns over the subsequent new interventions.
38. In looking at the internal alterations, HES consider that, overall, the proposals will not have a significant impact and that key internal features will be retained. The sub-division of the reception area is along a line where evidence clearly indicates a dividing wall once existed. The retention of the main staircase is

welcomed. The planning authority may wish to consider in more detail where existing decorative features (i.e. joinery and cornicing) will be retained, re-used or replaced. Drawings marked up with this information will be one way of assessing more comprehensively the impact of alterations on the interior of the building. HES would be happy to further input in the detailed handling of the interior if this will be helpful.

39. In summary the development raises no issues in relation to landscape. In the event of planning permission being granted a condition regarding the detail of the landscape proposals and a management plan to be submitted for the approval of CNPA.
40. **Aberdeenshire Council Roads Service** was consulted on 6 January 2016. There was no response at the time of reporting.
41. **Aberdeenshire Council Environmental Health** has no objection to the approval of the application on the basis that the space heating and water heating (with the inclusion of open fires) will be provided by gas boilers. However, should the means of space/water heating be changed to another potentially less cleaner form of combustion (for example biomass) Environmental Health should be re-consulted so that an assessment can be made of the likely impacts on local air quality.
42. **Aberdeenshire Council Contaminated Land** advise that formerly the site was the location of licensed underground petroleum storage. It is not known where this tank was located within the site or its condition (should the tank be still in situ). Where an application submitted for a change of use of the site would ask that a full site investigation be undertaken; however, as the proposals are for extension of a current building associated with the existing use of the site, recommend that the following formal note to applicant is incorporated into the decision document:

Petroleum was formerly stored on site, a potentially contaminative use. The applicant is advised that should any contamination of the ground be discovered during development the planning authority should be notified immediately. The extent and nature of the contamination should be investigated and a suitable scheme for the mitigation of any risks arising from the contamination should be agreed and implemented to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority. The responsibility for ensuring the safe development of the site rests with the developer.
43. **CNPA Ecology Officer** confirms a reasonable approach to mitigation for bats and that works must be carried out in accordance with the Species Protection Plan. Confirmation of the licence from SNH should be provided CNPA. In respect of the Construction Environmental Management Statement (required to detail protection measures for the Clunie Water/River Dee SAC), the provision of mitigation measures including silt traps, lagoons, grassy areas, tanking of water and silt, and protecting water courses from surface water during construction, is welcomed.

44. In summary the development would have an impact on ecology, but has the potential to be addressed by appropriate mitigation measures. In the event of planning permission being granted, conditions are required.
45. **CNPA Landscape Advisor** considers that the proposals for refurbishment and upgrading the hotel respect the character and experience of the built environment in Braemar and will have no adverse landscape effects. Careful design of the external environment will further enhance the relationship between the built and natural landscape. Proposals for the landscape and management of the gardens (both botanical garden and flower garden) should respect the simplicity of the natural flora found in this part of Aberdeenshire, use materials traditional of the area and are designed for its long term contribution to the settlement landscape.

REPRESENTATIONS

46. **Braemar Community Council** – Was consulted on 14 December 2015. There was no response at the time of reporting.
47. Two letters of representation were received, one offering neutral comment, and one offering support to the application.
48. Whilst neither representation was submitted as an objection, they raise a number of concerns in respect of the development proposal as follows:
 - 1) Construction traffic movements along Fife Brae and any conflict with pedestrians and residents and potential for damage to property. Suggesting traffic controls to prevent construction vehicles using Fife Brae;
 - 2) Impact upon wildlife and vegetation including otters, dippers, red squirrels and salmon. Suggesting that the trees and vegetation growing along the river bank are not removed or significantly reduced in height to ensure that habitats are not destroyed or affected by human presence.

APPRAISAL

49. The Fife Arms is an imposing B listed hotel located prominently within the centre of Braemar. The proposal is to refurbish, remodel and extend the hotel to provide a much enhanced hotel facility. The planning and listed building issues to be considered include:
 - a) the continued use of the building and site for hotel accommodation and its contribution to the socio-economic wellbeing of the Park,
 - b) the physical modifications to the listed building and how these may impact upon its character and historic interest,
 - c) the effect from external alterations upon the conservation area,
 - d) any impact upon designated species or habitats, and
 - e) how site access can be managed during the period of construction so as to minimise the impact upon residential amenity.

Continuation of 'Hotel' Use

50. The Fife Arms Hotel has remained in almost continuous use since construction, with the recent closure being a result of the ongoing refurbishment works. The supporting statement recognises that as part of the tourism and leisure offer of the Park the Fife Arms Hotel is a well-established and recognisable asset; the re-development of which will bring a major contribution to the local and surrounding economy.
51. It is accepted that such a significant investment to allow for the sensitive refurbishment of the hotel would help to safeguard the use of the site as hotel into the future, attracting year round visitors to Braemar and the Park whilst providing a much enhanced facility to be accessed by local residents. The works do not propose an increase in bed spaces (in fact there is a slight reduction as part of the re-modelling) and the use of the site also remains unchanged. Therefore there is no notable intensification of use of the site and the site remains compatible with the surrounding mixed uses; being commercial and residential.
52. The proposal also includes the provision of space for a small cinema that could be utilised by patrons and the public, public access to the bar/café, and a modest retail provision. These facilities are ancillary and part of the hotel use of the site but are nevertheless seen as beneficial to the local community.
53. Therefore the proposals comply with Policy 2: Supporting Economic Growth.

Works to the Listed Building

54. In assessing an application for listed building consent, the planning authority is required to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building, or its setting, or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

External

55. The proposed works to the listed building are considered to be sympathetic to the architectural character and historic interest of the Fife Arms. The principal frontage to Mar Road (accepting minor alteration to a window opening to form a doorway), and the gable wings to Clunie Water and Fife Brae would be subject to general refurbishment works in a manner which would see little change to their appearance other than a sensitive restoration. The restoration would be by utilising traditional materials and techniques where possible.
56. The ancillary buildings to the rear of the main structures, recently used as managers and staff accommodation would be subject to some sensitive remodelling. This would entail the removal of some later features (including bay window) allowing for the extension and alteration to the buildings to provide adaptable space for functions. The material choices and construction methods

are in keeping with vernacular buildings, whilst also being from sustainable sources. The approach is sympathetic to the listed building and is considered an enhancement whilst being consistent with the typical scale and arrangement of ancillary buildings that would have traditionally served the hotel.

57. The most significant external alterations revolve around the later flat roof kitchen addition contained within the 'C' plan of the main historic building. The proposal would see the welcome removal of the felted flat roof, and pended extensions with their replacement by an attractive courtyard, roofed in heather, and constructed from local timber and materials. The supporting statement claims that 'the materiality of the extensions has been derived from the commonly adopted palette for local backhouses of natural timber, sinusoidal profiled metal, natural slate, timber framed windows and conservation rooflights'. The precise detailing can be seen amongst the extensive suite of plans and visualisations submitted in support of the proposal.
58. The development also includes the installation of a new lift tower within the courtyard and is to be sited abutting an existing tower. This positioning makes the tower almost invisible from main public views and, being externally fitted, prevents the need to punch through the main structural flooring of the traditional building that would be required if the lift were internally provided. Access from the tower to each floor is provided through modified window openings or a small number of new openings slapping through the masonry wall. Other later staircase tower and rendered faces are to be freshened up and given granite coloured paint finish, with recessed sash style windows to further improve their appearance.
59. No landscaping works are proposed as part of the development. The agent has stated that site landscaping will follow which does not constitute development and so is not subject to the need for planning permission. CNPA has confirmed that provided the landscaping does not entail 'development such as engineering operations' planning permission or Listed Building Consent would not be required.
60. In respect of the external alterations and refurbishment, it is considered the proposal is well considered and would not have any significant adverse impacts upon the listed building. The proposals therefore comply with Policy 3: Sustainable Design, Policy 5: Landscape and Policy 9: Cultural Heritage.

Internal

61. The proposed works entail the remodelling of the layout and general refurbishment, including guest accommodation and public areas, as well as providing for multi-function spaces including a small cinema and retail space. Many of the rooms have been subject to remodelling over the years and do not contain any historic features of note. The proposal provides a benefit from the removal of boxed service ducts, piping and electrics along corridors.

62. The main public areas to the front of the hotel are to be subject to refurbishment with some partial remodelling, this includes the reinstatement (along evidence of an earlier wall) of the drawing room separation.
63. The architectural features of note include the staircase with attractive balustrades and newel post's, original (or early) timber flooring that was hidden under later coverings, leaded windows, architraves, and fireplace. A photographic survey of important internal features was provided along with details of the protection measures to be implemented during the course of the works to safeguard the original features from damage, this detailed protection by plywood boxing and Perspex sheeting.
64. Overall, and as stated by Historic Environment Scotland, the internal alterations will not have a significant detrimental impact and key internal features will be retained. The proposals are therefore in accordance with Policy 3: Sustainable Design and Policy 9: Cultural Heritage.

Conservation Area

65. Conservation areas are defined as 'areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'. All planning authorities are required from time to time to determine which areas meet this definition and to designate them as conservation areas. Conservation areas embrace the urban and rural: from the historic cores of our cities to isolated rural settlements or landscapes there is a wide range of historic places which might be designated as a conservation area.
66. The proposed external refurbishments and alterations would maintain the main principle elevations within the Conservation Area as part of a sensitive refurbishment. The areas to the rear of the hotel would be subject to the greatest change, and although these are not as public, the proposals are nevertheless seen as enhancing the appearance of the building and its setting within Braemar.
67. It is therefore considered that the proposal would preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the Braemar Conservation Area in accordance with Policy 9: Cultural Heritage.

European Protected Species (EPS)

68. A bat survey was undertaken with the results being submitted to accompany the planning application. The survey identified that bats are present in various locations of the main and ancillary buildings. As this information identifies the precise location of EPS it is kept sensitive on the public access system, but is nevertheless assessed and taken account of by the CNPA Ecology Officer and Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH).

69. A review of the survey and results led to SNH seeking additional information to justify the survey effort. This was subsequently provided along with the required Species Protection Plan (SPP).
70. The survey identified that the proposed works have the potential to impact upon EPS (Bats) and so a licence will be required from SNH. Both SNH and the CNPA Ecology Officer have reviewed the survey and SPP and consider that the survey effort was justified and that the SPP is appropriate. SNH have indicated that the licensing tests could be met on that basis and that a licence would likely be issued. Should consent be issued the bat survey and SPP should be approved as part of the permission and a confirmation of a licence presented to CNPA ahead of works to the areas subject to a bat presence.
71. There are no other species of national or local importance likely to be affected by the proposed works. The proposals are therefore in accordance with Policy 4: Natural Heritage.

River Dee Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

72. The Fife Arms is located adjacent to the Clunie Water a tributary of the River Dee and part of the SAC. Whilst the works are contained within the building and immediate site, given the proximity of the hotel to the Clunie Water, and the potential for some disturbance during the demolition and reconstruction of the extensions, SNH advised that a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) be written that would detail measures to minimise the risk of sedimentation to the Clunie Water.
73. In response, the applicant has provided a Construction Environmental Method Statement (CEMS) for the Fife Arms Hotel prepared by GLM (Gibbon Lawson McKee Ltd). The statement describes how construction activities shall be undertaken and managed in accordance with strict environmental commitments and per the requirements identified within the construction phase plan. The CEMS also follows SNH, contractual and legislative requirements and construction industry best practice.
74. The details contained within the CEMP are welcomed by the CNPA Ecology Officer and are considered sufficient to minimise the risk of sedimentation or pollution to the SAC. As such in this case, and as confirmed by SNH an appropriate assessment is not required. Therefore, the proposals are in compliance with Policy 4: Natural Heritage.

Construction Access and Residential Amenity

75. In addition to detailing measures to minimise the risk of pollution to the SAC, the CEMP also details measures to minimise noise and vibration nuisance during construction, ensure the safety of the public and establish environmental site rules and emergency procedures. These measures seek to ensure that the inevitable period of disruption on nearby residents is minimised as far as is practicable.

76. In response to a neighbour concern that construction traffic would utilise Fife Brae which may lead to damage, the applicant has provided a Traffic Management Plan (TMP) stating that care will be exercised in relation to all vehicular movements within the vicinity of the site. The plan states that traffic and deliveries will be managed with clearly identified signage and that an open public road network will be maintained for vehicles, pedestrians and emergency services at all times. It is stated that all deliveries will be received on a delivery only basis and a banksman will manage traffic. It is expected that all large vehicle deliveries will be to the car park opposite the hotel and may be transferred to a light vehicle for taking along a short section of Fife Brae to the rear of the hotel.
77. The main parking for the existing hotel is along the public road and within the public car parking areas nearby; the service access to the hotel is via the south access of Fife Brae immediately adjacent to the hotel. It is expected that construction delivery will utilise this established access and would not likely enter via the north access of Fife Brae.
78. The Aberdeenshire Council Roads Service was consulted for their views on construction access and traffic. There was no response at the time of reporting. However, it should be noted that any obstruction to the public highway or damage to the highway from abnormal loads may be more appropriately regulated by the Roads and Police Authority.
79. Notwithstanding the above it is expected that access for the refurbishment and alteration to the hotel site works can be accommodated within the existing road network, with the traffic management plan and CEMP minimising any impact upon the immediate area during the period of construction/refurbishment works. It is therefore considered that the proposals comply with Policies 3: Sustainable Design.

CONCLUSION

80. The proposed works are of a scale, design, and material finish that are complimentary to the architectural and historic interest of the listed Fife Arms, with the remodelling and intervention retaining many of the original features of note. Furthermore, the development both preserves and enhances the character and appearance of the Braemar Conservation Area. The proposal will maintain the use of the building as hotel through improvements to layout allowing for a more efficient functioning of the facility, thereby safeguarding a continued benefit from tourism to the local economy whilst adding to the community facilities within Braemar. The proposed works are largely contained within the footprint of the existing building and with EPS licencing available to mitigate for the presence of bats, there are no other anticipated impacts upon protected species or habitats of note. Construction methods and traffic management as detailed in the Construction Method Statement and Traffic Management Plan serve to minimise the disruption on residents, habitats and species, during the course of the development.

81. In light of the above the proposal is considered to be compliant with the relevant provisions and intent of the Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan (2015), and there are no other material considerations that would warrant the setting aside of adopted policy.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE AIMS OF THE NATIONAL PARK

Conserve and Enhance the Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Area

82. The proposed development fully supports this aim, as the proposal is of a scale and design to be complimentary to the traditional listed building within the Conservation Area with no direct or indirect impacts upon protected species or habitats of note that are not capable of mitigation.

Promote Sustainable Use of Natural Resources

83. The proposed development fully supports this aim, by modifying a substantial existing building to be more efficient without significantly increasing its footprint, thereby avoiding further land take within the settlement and maintaining the established hydrology.

Promote Understanding and Enjoyment of the Area

84. The proposed development readily supports this aim, by improving the appearance and level of accommodation available to local residents and visitors to the area, with multi-functional space made available in a manner that maintains the distinctive identity of Fife Arms and Braemar.

Promote Sustainable Economic and Social Development of the Area

85. The proposed development readily supports this aim by providing enhanced facilities and accommodation that can be accessed for year round activity.

RECOMMENDATION

That Members of the Committee support a recommendation to GRANT FULL PLANNING PERMISSION and LISTED BUILDING CONSENT for the refurbishment, alterations and extension to The Fife Arms subject to the following conditions:

Planning Permission 2015/0386/DET

1. Notwithstanding the approved details, the development shall be implemented in strict accordance with the approved Construction Environmental Method Statement (CEMS)

Reason: To ensure that during the construction of the development there are no adverse environmental impacts upon the River Dee SAC at Clunie Water in compliance with Local Development Plan Policy 4: Natural Heritage.

2. Notwithstanding the approved details, the development shall be implemented in strict accordance with the mitigation proposed and detailed under the approved Species Protection Plan (SPP) and Bat Survey unless otherwise agreed in writing by the CNPA as planning authority.

Reason: To ensure that the required protected species mitigation is completed as part of the development of the site in compliance with Local Development Plan Policy 4: Natural Heritage.

3. Notwithstanding the approved details, no development shall commence within the areas where Bats are present (as noted on the submitted and approved Bat Survey) until a copy of the EPS licence granted to the developer by SNH is submitted to the CNPA and written confirmation of acceptance is issued.

Reason: To ensure that the required protected species mitigation is designed and completed as part of the development of the site in compliance with Local Development Plan Policy 4: Natural Heritage

4. Notwithstanding the approved details, and prior to the commencement of the construction of the new rear building extensions and external refurbishment works, precise details of the materials and colour finish to be used on the walls, roof (including the heather types), and external joinery of the new constructions and refurbished/altered structures, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the CNPA, acting as planning authority. Thereafter the development shall be implemented in strict accordance with these approved details unless otherwise agreed.

Reason: To protect the character and integrity of the listed building and to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Braemar Conservation Area in compliance with Local Development Plan Policy 3: Sustainable Design, Policy 5: Landscape, and Policy 9: Cultural Heritage.

5. Notwithstanding the approved details, all new rooflights to the proposed building extensions and refurbished buildings shall be of a 'conservation pattern' unless otherwise agreed in writing by the CNPA as planning authority. Thereafter the development shall be implemented in strict accordance with these approved details

Reason: To protect the character and integrity of the listed building and to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Braemar Conservation Area in compliance with Local Development Plan Policy 3: Sustainable Design, Policy 5: Landscape, and Policy 9: Cultural Heritage.

6. Notwithstanding the approved details the development shall be implemented in strict accordance with the approved Construction Environmental Method

Statement (CEMS) and Traffic Management Plan (TMP) unless otherwise agreed in writing by the CNPA as planning authority.

Reason: To minimise the impact upon the environment and neighbouring amenity during the course of the construction phase of the development in compliance with Local Development Plan Policy 3: Sustainable Design.

Informatives:

1. In accordance with section 58(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended), this permission lapses on the expiration of a period of 3 years beginning with the date on which this permission is granted unless the development to which this permission relates is begun before that expiration.
2. Prior to the commencement of development, a notice of the intended date of initiation of development shall be submitted to the CNPA acting as Planning Authority and such notification shall contain the information set out in the 'Notification of Initiation of Development' Notice as appended, pursuant to Section 27A(1) of the Town & Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997.
3. Following the completion of the development, a notification of the completion shall, as soon as practicable, be submitted to the CNPA acting as Planning Authority and such notification shall contain the information as set out in the 'Notification of Completion of Development' Notice as appended, pursuant to Section 27B(1) of the Town & Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997.
4. The developer is advised that petroleum was formerly stored on site, a potentially contaminative use. Should any contamination of the ground be discovered during development the planning authority should be notified immediately. The extent and nature of the contamination should be investigated and a suitable scheme for the mitigation of any risks arising from the contamination should be agreed and implemented to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority. The responsibility for ensuring the safe development of the site rests with the developer.
5. The developer is reminded that with careful design site landscaping works will further enhance the relationship between the built and natural landscape. The detailed landscaping and management of the gardens (both botanical garden and flower garden) should respect the simplicity of the natural flora found in this part of Aberdeenshire, use materials traditional of the area and be designed for its long term contribution to the settlement landscape.
6. **Listed Building Consent 2015/0387/LBC**
 1. Notwithstanding the approved details, and prior to the commencement of the construction of the new rear building extensions and any external refurbishment works, precise details of the materials and colour finish to be used on the walls, roof (including the heather types), and external joinery (including doors, windows and bargeboards etc.) of the new constructions, refurbished/altered

structures, and main building, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the CNPA acting as planning authority. Thereafter the development shall proceed in accordance with these approved details unless otherwise agreed.

Reason: To protect the character and integrity of the listed building. In compliance with Local Development Plan Policy 9: Cultural Heritage.

2. Notwithstanding the approved details, the protection measures as detailed on the approved plans Dwg No: Protect-01 to Protect-04 shall be provided and maintained during the course of the internal refurbishment works and alterations to safeguard the architectural features from damage or loss unless otherwise agreed in writing by the CNPA as planning authority.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt to protect the integrity of the listed building in compliance with Local Development Plan Policy 9: Cultural Heritage.

3. All external timber windows to the main building shall be retained and restored as existing with no alteration to the frame size, proportions, or patterns unless otherwise agreed in writing by the CNPA as planning authority.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt to protect the integrity of the listed building by maintaining the fenestration detailing in compliance with Local Development Plan Policy 9: Cultural Heritage.

Informatives:

1. In accordance with Section 16 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas)(Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended) the development to which this listed building consent relates must commence within three years of the date of this decision notice. If development has not commenced within this period, then this listed building consent shall lapse.

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.