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## CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

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**Title:** REPORT ON CALLED-IN PLANNING APPLICATION

**Prepared by:** KATHERINE DONNACHIE  
(PLANNING OFFICER, DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT)

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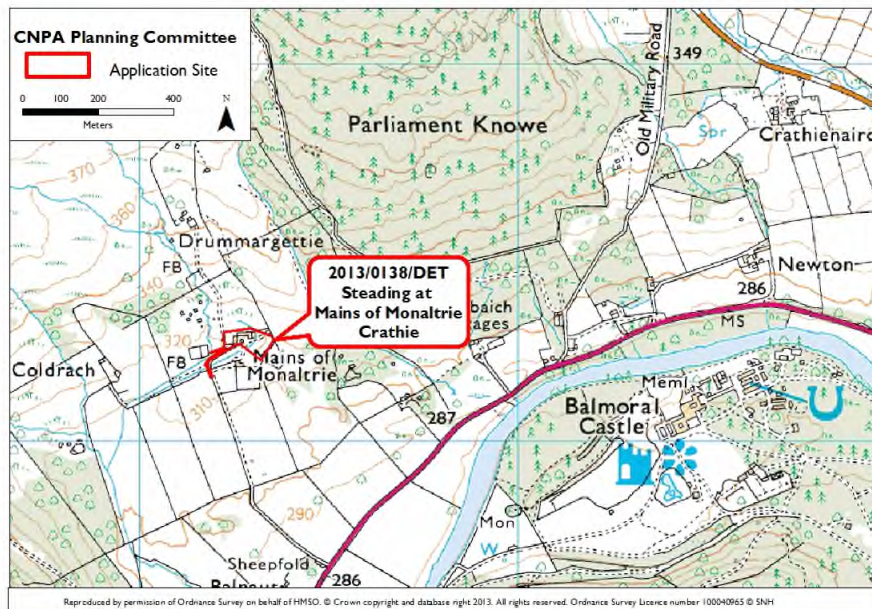
**DEVELOPMENT PROPOSED:** CONVERSION OF STEADING TO FORM 3 RESIDENTIAL UNITS

**REFERENCE:** 2013/0138/DET

**APPLICANT:** GORDON DONALDSON

**DATE CALLED-IN:** 6 MAY 2013

**RECOMMENDATION:** APPROVAL SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS

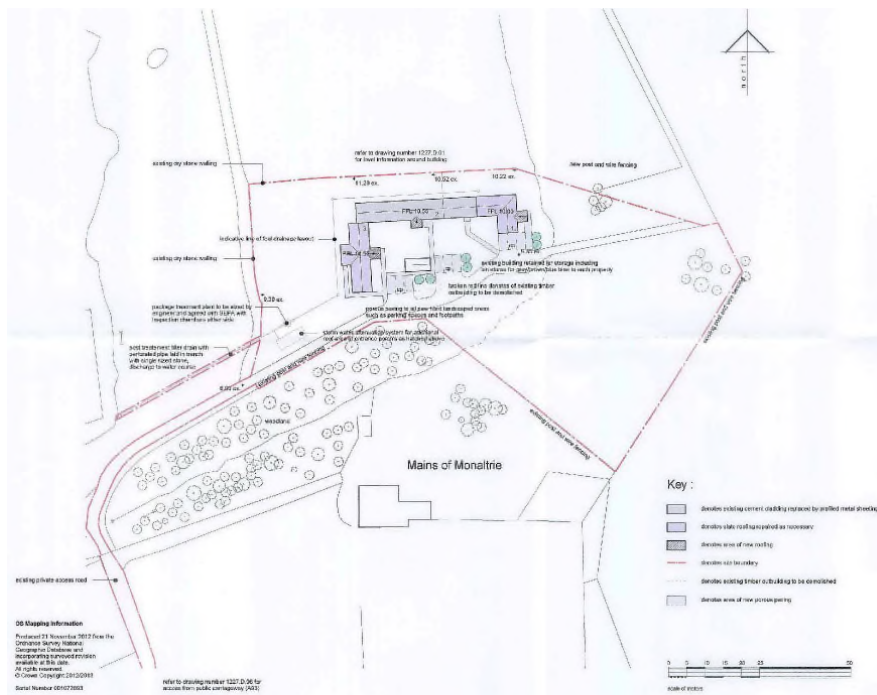


**Grid reference: 324271 E 795271 N**

**Fig. 1 - Location Plan**

## SITE DESCRIPTION AND PROPOSAL

1. This application seeks full planning permission for the conversion of an existing stone and slate steading to form three residential units. These 3 bedroomed units will be created within the footprint of the existing steading buildings, with part of an existing lean too stone outbuilding retained for storage, (including bins), purposes. A timber building attached to this outbuilding will be demolished. Car parking areas will be formed in the central courtyard area. A plan of the site layout is attached as **Figure 2** below.



**Fig. 2: Block Plan**

2. Some changes are proposed to the building in order to accommodate the residential use. Existing stone and slate finishes will be retained with any new roofs finished in natural slate to match. Existing openings in the building are to be used, with the main changes to the appearance being three new entrance porches, dormer windows, including two swept roof dormers. (The number and style of dormer windows has been reduced and amended following discussion with this Service.) All doors and windows will be finished in timber. Proposed porches will be clad in larch, with slate roofs. A copy of the proposed elevations is attached as **Figures 3 and 4** below.

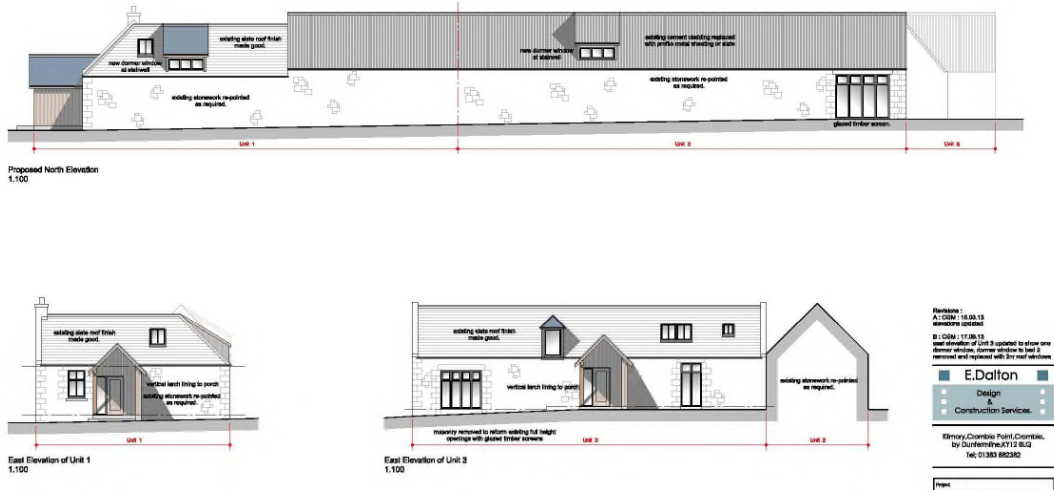


Fig. 3: Proposed North & East Elevations

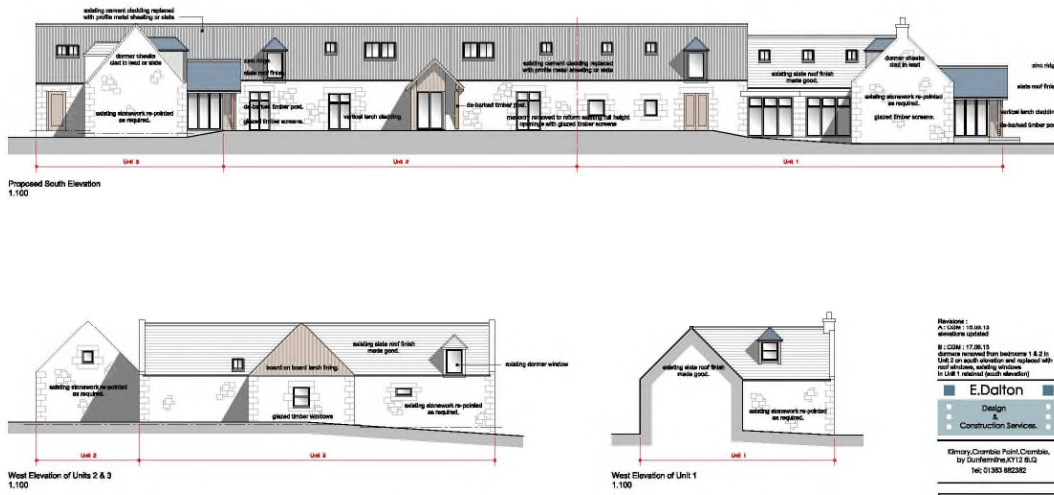


Fig. 4: Proposed South & West Elevations

3. This property is located at Mains of Monaltrie which is situated to the west of Ballater in an elevated rural location set well back from the public road and to the rear of the original farmhouse here. It is a traditional stone and slate U shaped steading, now disused and set around a courtyard.
4. Servicing will be via an existing farm track which leads northwards from the Ballater to Braemar A93 road. This access is shared with the farmhouse and it is proposed to improve the junction onto the public road in terms of widening and surfacing the first section of access to enable cars to pass comfortably. Drainage will be to a new private treatment plant with outfall to watercourse. A private water supply is proposed.

5. Supporting information has been provided including an emergent bat survey which concludes that there are no recent signs of bats in the buildings. Signs of barn owls and swallows were noted. The survey concludes that bat boxes should be provided and works should take place to avoid any potential disturbance of barn owls. A structural engineers report has now been provided which concludes that the building is suitable for conversion. Drainage information has also been provided and a design statement which explains the rationale behind the conversion.
6. In terms of planning history there have been two applications at Mains of Monaltrie recently, although not on this site itself. Firstly a retrospective notification application for an overhead line (Council reference APP/2012/3812) was dealt with by Aberdeenshire Council in 2012 when no objections were raised. An application to alter and extend the farmhouse at Mains of Monaltrie was approved earlier this year by Aberdeenshire Council (Reference APP/2013/0176/DET)

## DEVELOPMENT PLAN CONTEXT

### National policy

7. **Scottish Planning Policy (SPP)** is the statement of the Scottish Government's policy on nationally important land use planning matters. It sets out that planning authorities are encouraged to take a positive approach to development, recognising and responding to economic and financial conditions in considering proposals that would contribute to economic growth and has the basic aim "to achieve the right development in the right place." SPP generally supports conversions of existing buildings.

### Strategic Policies

#### Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2012-2017

8. 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.

Three long term outcomes for the Park are set out as follows:

- A sustainable economy supporting thriving businesses and communities;
- A special place for people and nature with natural and cultural heritage enhanced; and
- People enjoying the park through outstanding visitor and learning experiences.

9. 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.

### **Local Plan Policy**

10. The Cairngorms National Park Local Plan was formally adopted on 29<sup>th</sup> October 2010. The full text can be found at: <http://www.cairngorms.co.uk/parkauthority/publications/results.php?publicationID=265> The Local Plan contains a range of policies and new development requires to be assessed in relation to all policies contained in the Plan. Key policies are as follows
11. Policy 27 – Conversion and Reuse of Existing Traditional and Vernacular Buildings: conversion of existing traditional and vernacular buildings is supported where the building is redundant for its original use, and 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. This policy is supported by supplementary planning guidance.
12. Policy 16: Design Standards for new development applies which sets out the design standards to be met with new development and is supported by supplementary planning guidance in the form of the sustainable design guide.
13. Policy 6 ; Landscape which sets out that there will be a presumption against development which does not conserve and enhance the landscape character of the National Park unless any significant adverse effects are outweighed by social or economic benefits of national importance and all adverse effects can be mitigated.
14. Policy 18 Developer Contributions and Policy 19 Contributions to Affordable Housing – these policies set out the basis for any requirements for contributions based on the impacts and scale of development.
15. Policy 4 Protected Species and Policy 5 Biodiversity set out the requirement to ensure no adverse impacts on European Protected species and the need to promote biodiversity
16. Other policies relating to transport, waste management, developer contributions and water resources also apply in terms of servicing.

## Supplementary Planning Guidance

17. In addition to the adoption of the Cairngorms National Park Local Plan (2010) on 29th October 2010, a number of Supplementary Planning Guidance documents were also adopted. Key for the current proposal is the sustainable design guide which sets out guidance on design and siting, guidance on conversion, and guidance on natural heritage.

## CONSULTATIONS

18. **Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA)** have no objections and referred to their standing advice for this type of small scale development. They note that the site lies outwith the indicative flood map area but that there are two watercourses in the vicinity of the site whereby it is recommended that contact is made with the Council's flood protection team who may hold additional information on flooding, or further information could be sought from the applicants regarding the channel size and the bed and bank levels of the small watercourse.
19. **Aberdeenshire Council's Flood Prevention Unit** have been consulted following recent receipt of drainage information relating to SEPA's comments above and their comments are awaited at the time of writing.
20. **Balmoral Estates** have no objections.
21. **Aberdeenshire Council Roads Officers** have noted that adequate parking is proposed and that the existing junction alignment onto the public road (A93) is good. However they have asked that revised plans be submitted to show the first 10 metres of the access widened to 5 metres and surfaced in bitmac together with an existing gate on the track relocated at least 12 metres from the edge of the public road carriageway to allow safe access for all vehicles including the additional traffic generated. Until such plans are provided they object to the application. Following discussion Roads officers have agreed that a lesser standard of access widening may be appropriate in this rural location. Revised plans to show the improvements have now been submitted and the comments of the Roads Service on these are awaited at the time of writing.
22. **Aberdeenshire Council Environmental Health Officers** note that negotiations are ongoing by the applicant to secure access to a nearby private water supply. The Service has no objections providing a planning condition is imposed to require submission of full details of the supply before occupation of any unit together with a requirement that the supply be subject to adequate treatment to ensure its adequacy. ( The agents have now submitted confirmation of availability of supply)

23. **Aberdeenshire Council's Planning Gain Team** has assessed the impact of the development upon local services and concluded that a contribution to affordable housing, library and recreational facilities is required. The applicant has confirmed agreement to this approach by means of a legal agreement.
24. **Aberdeenshire Council's Archaeology Officer** advises that a level one standing buildings level survey should be carried out on the extant structures given that the farmstead dates from the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

## REPRESENTATIONS

25. The application was advertised in the local press and no representations have been received. The applicant's agent has requested the opportunity for his client to be heard at Committee.

## APPRAISAL

### Principle

26. National and local planning policies support the principle of conversion of existing buildings to residential use subject to detailed matters such as design and environmental criteria being met. It is therefore the detail of this proposal which is under consideration.

### Residential Amenity

27. The building is located sufficiently far from the existing house at Mains of Monaltrie to protect the privacy and amenity of all parties. In addition the buildings are considered to be large enough to comfortably accommodate the three units proposed and still provide the level of privacy and amenity appropriate to this type of rural area.

### Environmental Issues

28. There are no particular issues arising from this conversion, and conditions can be imposed to enhance biodiversity by seeking planting and provision of bat boxes. The applicant is agreeable to these measures.

### Landscape and Design Impacts

29. The landscape impacts of this proposal are considered to be positive, sympathetically bringing a redundant building back into use. The design is considered to be appropriate, and enables a conversion to meet modern living standards, with changes proposed being in character with the building. Finishes are of a good quality, retaining the original character, and overall the proposal is considered to comply with policy and guidance.

## **Technical Issues**

30. The site is generally capable of being satisfactorily serviced with revised information submitted which seeks to address points raised by consultees. I am confident that the revised plans are generally acceptable in terms of roads and drainage issues, subject to the final comments of the relevant consultees which should be able to be incorporated as planning conditions.

## **Conclusion**

31. In these overall circumstances it is considered that the proposed development complies with planning policies and with the aims of the National Park. Approval is recommended subject to suitable planning conditions.

## **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE AIMS OF THE NATIONAL PARK**

### **Conserve and Enhance the Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Area**

32. The proposal supports this aim, and would conserve the cultural heritage of the area by bringing the steading building back into a sympathetic use. There are no adverse natural heritage impacts with the opportunity taken via use of planning conditions to enhance natural heritage, for example through provision of bat roosting boxes.

### **Promote Sustainable Use of Natural Resources**

33. The proposed development supports this aim by enabling the restoration of an existing building, bringing it back into productive use which is inherently more sustainable than new build

### **Promote Understanding and Enjoyment of the Area**

34. The proposal may partly support this aim by providing an opportunity for people to live in the National Park and enjoy its facilities and amenities.

### **Promote Sustainable Economic and Social Development of the Area**

35. The proposed development will help support the social and economic development of the area by providing a range of housing units, with the associated construction work providing an opportunity for supporting the local economy if local contractors and tradesmen are used.



## RECOMMENDATION

**That Members of the Committee support a recommendation to GRANT full planning permission for CONVERSION OF STEADING TO FORM 3 RESIDENTIAL UNITS subject to:**

- (a) Any comments received from Aberdeenshire Roads and Flood Prevention Officers in relation to the additional information provided being incorporated as planning conditions as required.
- (b) Conclusion of a legal agreement regarding payment of developer contributions
- (c) the following planning conditions

1. The development to which this permission relates must be begun within three years from the date of this permission.

**Reason:** To comply with Section 58 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act, 1997.

2. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Scotland Order and any order or legislation amending it, unless otherwise agreed with the Cairngorms National Park Authority acting as Planning Authority, the boundary enclosures shall be in accordance with the approved plans ( i.e. natural stone dykes retained and post and wire fencing) with any further definition of boundaries or erection of boundary enclosures requiring submission of a planning application. Similarly any proposals to extend or alter the properties shall require submission of a planning application.

**Reason:** To ensure that the development fits in well in the surrounding area and respects the character of the buildings, in accordance with planning policies.

3. No work shall start on the conversion of the buildings until the following information is submitted to and approved by the Cairngorms National Park Authority acting as Planning Authority,
  - Finishes of the parking areas.

The development shall thereafter be completed in accordance with the approved details. Other external finishes (i.e. roof, walls, windows and doors) shall be completed in accordance with the approved plans unless otherwise agreed with the Cairngorms National Park Authority acting as Planning Authority and all rainwater goods shall be black.

**Reason:** To ensure that the development fits in well in the surrounding area and respects the character of the buildings, in accordance with planning policies.

4. No unit shall be occupied until the drainage (foul and surface) has been installed in accordance with the approved drainage plan and statement.

**Reason:** To ensure that satisfactory servicing arrangements are provided in accordance with Local Plan policies.

5. No unit shall be occupied until the access and junction onto the A93 has been completed and surfaced in accordance with the approved plans ( drawing number I227.D.09).

**Reason:** To ensure that satisfactory servicing arrangements are provided in accordance with Local Plan policies.

6. No unit shall be occupied until a satisfactory water supply has been provided in accordance with details to be provided to the Cairngorms National Park Authority acting as Planning Authority in consultation with Aberdeenshire Council's Environmental Health Service. Such details to be submitted and approved before work starts on the conversion with any treatment required implemented in accordance with the approved details.

**Reason:** To ensure that satisfactory servicing arrangements are provided in accordance with Local Plan policies.

7. No work shall start on site an archaeological standing building survey shall be submitted to the Cairngorms National Park Authority acting as Planning Authority. This survey shall be a full descriptive record of the buildings with measured floor plans, photographs of the interior and exterior of the buildings, plus a written account of the building's plan, form, function, age and development sequence.

**Reason:** To record features of the historic environment and in line with Local Plan policies on cultural heritage.

8. No work shall commence on the conversion of the buildings until details of bat and barn owl boxes to be installed on site have been submitted to and approved by the Cairngorms National Park Authority acting as Planning Authority the work shall thereafter be implemented in accordance with the approved details before any unit is occupied.

**Reason:** To ensure that there is no adverse environmental impact in accordance with planning policies.

9. No work to commence on conversion of the buildings until detail of proposed landscaping of the site have been submitted to and approved by the Cairngorms National Park Authority acting as Planning Authority – these details to reflect the requirement for native planting. The approved scheme shall thereafter be implemented in the first planting season following occupation of the first unit.

**Reason:** To ensure that the development fits in well in the surrounding area and respects the character of the buildings, in accordance with planning policies.

### Information Notes

1. Please ensure that you contact SEPA regarding any requirements they may have –please refer to their comments on this application for further details.
2. Should there be any evidence of bats on site when work commences the developer should contact the Cairngorms National Park Authority immediately and cease work.

**Katherine Donnachie**

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**8 July 2013**

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.