
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

Title: REPORT ON CALLED-IN PLANNING APPLICATION

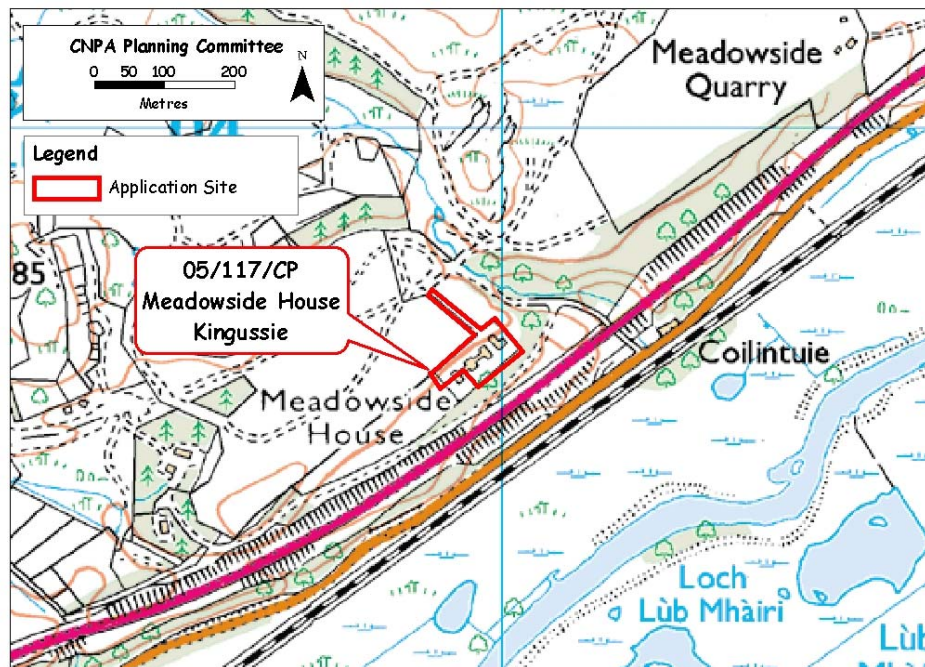
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(DEVELOPMENT CONTROL)

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSED: ALTERATIONS AND CHANGE OF USE OF GUESTS SUN ROOM TO DWELLING FOR HOLIDAY ACCOMMODATION.

REFERENCE: 05/117/CP

APPLICANT: Mr J ABDUL KARIM

DATE CALLED-IN: 24 March 2005



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Fig. 1 - Location Plan



Fig 2 Existing sunroom and pergola area to be converted/extended.

SITE DESCRIPTION AND PROPOSAL

1. The site is part of a former hospital close to the Highland Wildlife Park that has been converted to a range of residential accommodation in the mid 1990s. Planning Permission was granted for the conversion of the ward blocks to eight self-catering units for tourist accommodation only. Subsequently, planning permission was granted in 1995 for the change of use of 3 of the self-catering units to form 3 dwellings for permanent accommodation. The detached sunroom in the northeast corner of this site, which is the subject of the current proposal, received permission in 2000.
2. The existing building is a large pitched roof sunroom of timber construction with a corrugated roof for guests staying in the converted holiday cottages to use. It is understood that the sunroom has been under utilised by guests so the proposal is to convert the building to an additional self-catering unit. This would be achieved by adding a pitched roof extension to the footprint of the sunroom. A pergola and barbecue currently occupies this area. The resulting lodge will feature 3 bedrooms with lounge and kitchen facilities. External finishes will include stone plinths to match nearby cottages with vertical timber boarding and a slate roof.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN CONTEXT

3. **Policy G2 (Design for Sustainability) of the Highland Structure Plan** states that developments will be assessed on the extent to which they, amongst other things, impact on resources such as habitats, species, landscape, scenery and are in keeping with the local character and the historic and natural environment. **Policy H3 (Housing in the Countryside)** states that new housing and conversions of non traditional buildings in the open countryside will not be permitted, unless it can be demonstrated that they are required for the management of the land and related family purposes. **Policy L4 (Landscape Character) of the Highland Structure Plan** indicates that the Council will have regard to the desirability of maintaining and enhancing present landscape character in the consideration of development proposals.
4. **Policy H3 of the Highland Structure Plan (Housing in the Countryside)** considers that new housing will generally be within existing and planned new settlements and that new housing will not be permitted unless it is required for the management of land and related family purposes.
5. **Policy 2.1.2.3 of the Badenoch and Strathspey Local Plan** considers that a strong presumption will be maintained against the development of houses in restricted countryside areas.
6. **Highland Council Development Plan Guidelines (April 2003)** defines what is meant by management of land and related family purposes under **Policy H3** as being for farmers, retired farmers and their spouses. With regard to business enterprises the guidelines state that. "For other business enterprises evidence must be provided that the business has been established for at least two years before consideration will be given to any application for associated housing".
7. **Policy T2 (Tourism Developments)** states that the Council will support high quality tourism development proposals, particularly those which extend the tourism season, provide wet weather opportunities, spread economic benefits more widely, are accessible by means other than private vehicles and provide opportunities for the sustainable enjoyment and interpretation of the area's heritage.
8. **Policy T3 (Self Catering Tourist Accommodation)** states that permission for tourist accommodation proposals will be granted only on the basis of the development not being used for permanent residential accommodation. This will be secured by means of an appropriate occupancy condition.
9. **Policy 2.2.10 of the Badenoch and Strathspey Local Plan** considers that the council will encourage the development of tourist accommodation and facilities at suitable sites within or immediately adjoining communities. In the wider countryside priority will be given to the expansion of existing facilities.

10. **Policy BC5 of the Highland Structure Plan (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas)** considers that the Council will seek to preserve Highland's buildings and groups of buildings of historic or architectural interest, some of which may be at risk from neglect.

CONSULTATIONS

11. **SEPA** note that the existing drainage system has not in the past been the subject of failure and providing that the accommodation remains in the same ownership as Meadowside House and will only be used for holiday letting then SEPA has no objection. SEPA has no objection to the surface water drainage measures proposed (soakaways).
12. **Highland Council Planners** have no objection to the application provided that the premises are used as holiday accommodation as part of the Meadowside self-catering group and not as full time residential accommodation in separate ownership from the holiday complex. It is considered that the extension to an existing sunroom to form the three bedroom accommodation is well executed with finishes that tie in well with the adjacent listed buildings.
13. **Highland Council Conservation Architect** has no adverse comments to make on the proposal noting the intention to use natural stone, natural slate and timber cladding and framing and is more relaxed about this proposal than previous alterations to the listed buildings themselves.
14. **Highland Council Area Roads Manager** has no comment on the application provided that it is linked to the existing holiday accommodation at the site.

REPRESENTATIONS

15. **Kincraig and Vicinity Community Council** has no objections to the proposal.

APPRAISAL

16. The key issues for this report are the acceptability of the holiday accommodation in principle and the detailed design of the resulting building, which is located nearby historic buildings.
17. In terms of housing policy this site is located in a restricted countryside area where new build permanent housing will be resisted based upon

Policy H3 of the Highland Structure Plan and Policy 2.1.2.3 of the Badenoch and Strathspey Local Plan.

18. While new build permanent residential accommodation in this location would be resisted, this application proposes tourist accommodation and the applicant's agent has written a letter to confirm this to be the case. Self-catering tourist accommodation is supported by policies **T2 and T3 of the Highland Structure Plan** and given that this is an existing tourism business such accommodation is also supported by **Policy 2.2.10 of the Local Plan**. The applicant runs an existing holiday accommodation business at the site and the proposal is to adapt/extend an under utilised building to expand the business opportunities at the site. The policy stance clearly supports holiday accommodation but not permanent residential accommodation. Therefore, the scheme is considered acceptable in principle subject to a condition restricting the use to holiday accommodation in connection with the business only.
19. The former hospital complex was B grade listed in 1992. Given this, careful consideration must be given to any additions/extensions or new buildings in the grounds of the listed complex. In this case, it is important to note that there is an existing sunroom at the site, which this proposal intends to extend. A pitched roof building with natural slate roof and natural stone plinths is proposed to echo the stone and slate construction of the former hospital complex adjacent. This will be an improvement upon the existing sunroom, which has a corrugated roof. The Conservation Architect at Highland Council has been consulted upon the proposal and considers the form of the new building and the detailed materials to be appropriate to the setting of the historic buildings. In general terms the building would appear to be sensitively designed, thereby according with **Highland Structure Plan Policy BC5** and I raise no objection to the proposal. With regard to technical matters no objection is raised regarding highways or drainage providing that the accommodation is not used for permanent residential purposes and is retained as part of the business.
20. Overall, the proposal is considered positive, is supported by consultees and complies with planning policy, subject to ensuring that the resulting building remains part of the commercial accommodation at the site. This is achieved by condition No 2.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE AIMS OF THE NATIONAL PARK

Conserve and Enhance the Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Area

21. The proposal extends purely onto an existing patio/pergola area, which is attached to the sunroom so there are no natural heritage implications. There are cultural heritage interests here in the form of the listed complex of buildings, but this proposal purely extends an existing building using appropriate forms and materials, therefore the proposal has no adverse impact on the cultural setting of the buildings.

Promote Sustainable Use of Natural Resources

22. Some of the materials, particularly the stone will be sourced locally and local contractors will be employed to carry out the works.

Promote Understanding and Enjoyment of the Area

23. The provision of additional holiday accommodation may help to foster the understanding and enjoyment of the area.

Promote Sustainable Economic and Social Development of the Area

24. The proposal helps to support and reinforce an existing holiday accommodation business so can be considered positive in terms of economic benefits to the area.

RECOMMENDATION

25. That Members of the Committee support a recommendation to: **GRANT Full Planning Permission** for the extension/conversion of a sunroom to form holiday accommodation on land at Meadowside House, subject to the following conditions.

1. The development to which this permission relates must be begun within five years from the date of this permission.
2. The proposed building shall only be used as holiday accommodation ancillary to and in connection with the business at the site and shall not be sold separately or be used by a tenant, lessee, owner or occupier as their only or principal dwellinghouse. No single period of occupation shall exceed two months. Occupation shall be restricted to use by persons requiring to stay in the area for recreational or vocational purposes.
3. Exact details and specifications of all proposed external finishing materials (including roofing materials) shall be submitted for the further approval of the Cairngorms National Park Authority acting as planning authority before any work commences on site.

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13 May 2005

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Planning Paper 4 *Committee Date 20 May 2005*