
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

Title: REPORT ON CALLED-IN PLANNING APPLICATION

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(DEVELOPMENT CONTROL)

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSED: ERECTION OF THREE STOREY STAFF ACCOMODATION BLOCK, AVIEMORE CENTRE, AVIEMORE

REFERENCE: 04/083/CP

APPLICANT: AVIEMORE HIGHLAND RESORT

DATE CALLED-IN: 27 FEBRUARY 2004



Fig. 1 - Location Plan

SITE DESCRIPTION AND PROPOSAL

1. The site lies within the Aviemore Highland Resort between Grampian Road and the A9. The resort in general is currently subject to a wide range of development activity with several buildings currently under construction. This particular site is accessed off a link road which is currently being laid out. To the south of the application site is the Highlands Hotel and an older staff accommodation block, to the west is the A9 embankment, and to the north a proposed car parking area, beyond this is the Scandinavian Village. To the east is an open area of ground where construction has recently started on a staff accommodation block.
2. The design of the building proposed is very much based on the building currently under construction that was processed by Highland Council and is positioned approximately 15 metres to the west of that building. The block would have an 'L' shaped footprint, with three storeys and a standard centrally pitched roof with square windows. Materials would include Marley slate coloured roof tiles, with an off-white render finish to external walls to match the nearby hotel. Windows would be uPVC.
3. The block would provide 48 bedrooms for staff working at the resort with communal kitchen and lounge facilities on each floor. The car parking capacity is also proposed to be altered by this application. The original site around the existing staff block had 77 car parking spaces, two new areas of parking are added to the capacity with one parking area either side of the access road to the accommodation blocks bringing the total car parking spaces in this area up to 101. This results in 24 in total for the block proposed.



View of Site from North East



Staff Block under Construction

DEVELOPMENT PLAN CONTEXT

4. The Highland Structure Plan (Policy T2) states that it will support high quality tourism development proposals, particularly those which extend the tourist 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 of the area's heritage. Policy

2.2.10 of the Badenoch and Strathspey Local Plan encourages the development of tourist facilities at suitable sites within or immediately adjoining communities. The Aviemore section of the Local Plan supports the redevelopment of the Aviemore Centre to revitalise the village and reaffirm its status as an international visitor destination.

CONSULTATIONS

5. Aviemore Community Council at their meeting felt that the application would provide an excessive staff requirement for the number of guests to be served.
6. The Director of Technical Services for the Highland Council has expressed no objection to the proposal.
7. The Area Roads and Community Works Manager has suggested conditions on the application that no development shall commence until the appropriate reserved matters as contained in Highland Council Planning Permission No BS/02/00007/OUTBS have been addressed to the satisfaction of the planning authority; that no development shall commence until the appropriate terms of the registered minute of agreement, dated 18 December 2003 between Highland Council, Aviemore Highland Resort and others, have been addressed to the satisfaction of Highland Council; and that dedicated parking and manoeuvring space and access shall be provided within the curtilage of the site commensurate with the scale and nature of the development proposed and shall satisfy Highland Council's Road Guidelines for New Developments.

REPRESENTATIONS

8. No representations have been received in relation to this proposal.

APPRAISAL

9. The proposal is essentially part of the wider development of the Aviemore Resort and is linked to the tourist facilities being provided. The proposal is simply to house staff who will be employed to service the site. The proposal consists of a 48 bedroom staff accommodation block in addition to the one adjacent and already under construction. The Community Council consider that this amount of staff accommodation is excessive. However, recent press reports have indicated that up to 4, 000 staff could eventually be employed at the site. It is important to note that this issue is largely one for the management of the site and presumably the proposal would not have been put forward if the building was not required. The resort have responded stating that this is part of an initial staff requirement. The applicant's also point out that to open the resort with appropriate staffing levels leaves the company with a temporary burden to provide accommodation given a shortage of housing in the Aviemore area. The building is intended so that interim accommodation can be provided until employees can secure permanent homes in the area. The resort further points out that the number of residential guests could be 1, 000

per day plus visitors to the resort, and that the staffing levels represent the minimum level of service throughout the portfolio of MacDonalds Hotels.

10. Given the leisure nature of the resort it would seem reasonable for the appropriate level of staff accommodation required to be provided, because of this, no objection is raised to the principle of the block proposed.
11. The building is to be sited behind an accommodation block processed by Highland Council. The footprint of the building would be sited behind that building which is currently under construction. There are birch trees in the vicinity of the proposed building but not on the site of the building proposed. Initial concern was raised with the applicant regarding the buildings position in relation to the A9 and whether it would be effectively screened from there. The applicant has provided a cross section plan that shows the building set below the A9 embankment, so any visual impact from the A9 would be limited, from any other views the building would be seen in the context of other development and is partly screened from the link road around the development by the accommodation block under construction.
12. The design of the building is simple in nature and while not of any special architectural merit is functions in terms of its design. More significantly, the design accords with the block currently under construction and given this, it would be unreasonable to propose design changes therefore, no objection is raised in terms of design.
13. In terms of access and parking issues the Highland Council Area Works and Community Manager has responded by raising no objection to the proposal providing that the conditions of the outline consent are met . The number of car parking spaces proposed around the two blocks has been raised to 101 from 77, allowing a total of 24 for the new block. However, it may well be the case that a significant number of staff will not necessarily be car owners and it is relevant to point out that Aviemore is served by buses and trains enabling staff to use public transport. The Area Roads Manager, ultimately raises no objection to the proposal, but recommends conditions that development should not be commenced until the reserved matters contained in Highland Council Planning Permission No BS/02/00007/OUTBS have been addressed to the satisfaction of the local planning authority. It is also recommended that no development shall commence that the terms of the registered minute of agreement, dated 18 December, 2003 between Highland Council and Aviemore Highland Resort and others has been addressed to the satisfaction of Highland Council.
14. The Area Manager also recommends a condition that the dedicated parking and manoeuvring space, commensurate with the scale and nature of the development proposed, and a suitable access road, shall be provided within the curtilage of the site and that such details shall satisfy the requirements of Highland Council's Guidelines for New Developments.
15. In order to achieve consistency in the terms of any approval a request has been made for details of the planning permission and conditions relating the staff

building currently under construction. At the time of writing these have not been received.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE AIMS OF THE PARK

Conserve and Enhance the Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Area

16. The proposal would have little effect in terms of the natural and cultural heritage of the area, the proposed building is close to trees but no felling is proposed.

Promote Sustainable Use of Natural Resources

17. There is nothing in the application which would be likely to result in positive, or negative impacts in terms of this aim.

Promote Understanding and Enjoyment of the Area

18. The facilities proposed are part of the wider leisure proposals for the resort to attract visitors and as such would be likely to contribute to promoting understanding and enjoyment of the area.

Promote Sustainable Economic and Social Development of the Area's Communities

19. The proposal is part of the wider and considerable investment in the Aviemore Highland Resort and as such contributes to the economic development of the area, both in terms of the initial construction and the ongoing economic investment of bringing jobs and visitors to the area.

RECOMMENDATION

Given that the principle of the development is considered to be acceptable it is hoped that a full and detailed recommendation in support of the application can be made at the meeting, assuming that all of the outstanding information has been received.

Andrew Tait
Date 17 May 2004

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