
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

Title: REPORT ON CALLED-IN PLANNING APPLICATION

Prepared by: NEIL STEWART, PLANNING OFFICER
(DEVELOPMENT CONTROL)

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSED: SITING OF 3 CARAVANS AND 1 MOBILE STORAGE UNIT, BADAGUISH, AViemore

REFERENCE: 03/042/CP

APPLICANT: PAUL A. CORRIGAN MBE, BADAGUISH OUTDOOR CENTRE, AViemore

DATE CALLED-IN: 10 OCTOBER 2003



Fig. 1 - Location Plan

SITE DESCRIPTION AND PROPOSAL

1. Badaguish Outdoor Centre is located within the Glenmore Forest Park to the north of Loch Morlich. The site, which is surrounded by Forestry Commission woodland, is accessed off the public road from Aviemore to the Cairngorm Mountain, approximately 3 km east of Coyerbridge (see Fig. 1 above). There are a mixture of buildings on the site, including timber chalets, a bunkhouse, the wardens house, a shower and toilet block, and a portal frame building for indoor sporting activities. There are also various structures and apparatus for outdoor activities.
2. There are three small caravans and a flat roofed mobile unit currently sited to the side and rear of the existing shower block which is positioned within the existing group of buildings and set against a backdrop of woodland (see Fig. 2 below). The caravans provide sleeping accommodation for temporary staff during the summer months when the outdoor centre is operating its courses and activities. The staff have living accommodation in an existing chalet building located nearby. The mobile unit is used for storage purposes.

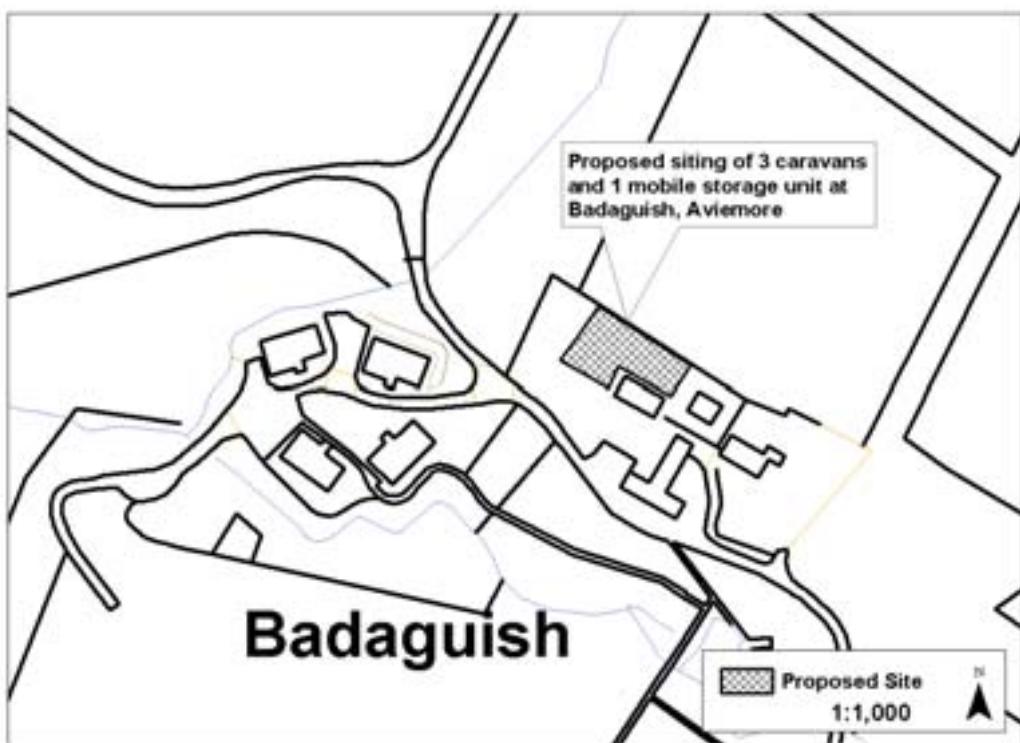


Fig. 2 – Site Plan

3. The caravans have been on site for approximately 10 years with temporary permission being granted by The Highland Council in 1993 and then renewed in 1997. This application seeks to renew the temporary permission in order that the caravans can be retained on site (see Fig. 3 below). Permission is also sought to authorise the siting of the mobile storage unit. This unit has been in its position for approximately 1 year (see Fig. 4 below).



Fig. 3 – Existing Caravans



Fig. 4 – Existing Mobile Storage Unit

DEVELOPMENT PLAN CONTEXT

The Highland Structure Plan 2001

4. Policy G2 (Design for Sustainability) sets out certain criteria against which proposed developments will be assessed. These include the extent to which they demonstrate sensitive siting and high quality design in keeping with the local character and historic and natural environment.

Badenoch and Strathspey Local Plan 1997

5. The site lies within the Glenmore Corridor as identified in the Adopted Local Plan for the area. Policy 2.5.11 states that given the conservation, recreational and amenity interests of national/international significance in the Glenmore Corridor, the Highland Council has brought forward a framework. This includes guidelines for visitor management, conservation of the natural heritage and landscape character, and established settlements. In this context, Policy 4.14.1 states that whilst reasonable consolidation and improvement of established businesses is acceptable in principle, the Council will maintain a strong presumption against further development throughout the area, except where this is considered essential for the proper management of visitors. This will generally comprise measures to avoid conflict between uses and activities, hazard or jeopardy to public safety, damage to the environment; or otherwise involve refurbishment/extension or replacement of buildings, where proposals should be of a scale subservient to or consistent with the existing property, and uses do not adversely affect amenity.

CONSULTATIONS

6. As the Local Authority for the area, The Highland Council has been formally consulted. The officer response, under delegated powers, expresses concern about the poor appearance of the caravans and it states that although they are comparatively well concealed, The Council are unhappy about the principle of accepting them on a permanent basis. The response also states that caravans give a poor quality of living accommodation and that in this respect, arguably, there is a possible conflict between the proposal and the Approved Structure Plan Policy G2 (Design and Sustainability).
7. In addition it is stated that, given the attractive appearance and homogeneous character of the rest of the Badaguish complex, it would be preferable if this temporary expedient for accommodation, which has been going on for several years, was now terminated and replaced with permanent facilities of comparable quality and appearance. At best, they recommend a maximum one year's further consent with a clear indication that thereafter the structures should be removed and the time used to develop a more acceptable permanent solution for staff accommodation.

REPRESENTATIONS

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

APPRAISAL

9. It is clear from the planning history, which includes a renewal of temporary permission in 1997, that these caravans have been on site for approximately 10 years. There has therefore been a need for their existence. The applicants have advised that they are only used for sleeping accommodation by volunteer employees over the summer months. The employees use the living facilities in an existing adjacent chalet building. The portacabin unit has replaced another caravan and is used for storage purposes.
10. The positioning of the structures is fairly well concealed and their visual impact on the wider area is minimal. The woodland to the rear provides a backdrop and the existing shower block building to the front helps provide screening. However, although the portacabin is in a generally adequate state of repair, it is the case that the caravans are of poor appearance. Although they are used for only temporary sleeping accommodation and only at certain times of the year, the caravans are not acceptable as a permanent solution to the problem of staff accommodation.
11. Local plan policy aims to consolidate and improve existing businesses in the area, while ensuring that there are no detrimental effects. The proposals do not raise significant implications on the wider landscape and since there remains a need for the existence of the structures, it is not reasonable to terminate the existing situation by refusing permission, without giving the applicants an opportunity to actively investigate a permanent solution.
12. Approved Structure Plan Policy G2 (Design for Sustainability) seeks to ensure that developments demonstrate sensitive siting and a high quality of design. In this instance, the structures would not be acceptable in terms of design, if they were to be anything more than a temporary expedient.
13. My conclusion is along the same lines as those stated by The Highland Council. The reasonable way forward is to permit a further, but final, temporary period of one year and in doing so, advise the applicant, in writing, that it is unlikely that a further temporary period would be granted. In the meantime, the applicants would be encouraged to investigate a permanent solution to the problem of staff accommodation at the Outdoor Centre.

RECOMMENDATION

That Members of the Committee support a recommendation to:

Grant Permission for the Siting of 3 Caravans and a Mobile Storage Unit at Badaguish Outdoor Centre, Aviemore, for a Further Temporary Period of 1 Year, subject to the following condition:-

- i) The caravans and mobile storage unit, hereby permitted, shall be completely removed, their use permanently discontinued and the land reinstated to its former condition no later than one year from the date of this planning permission, unless a further extension to the time period is agreed in writing, following the submission of a planning application, with the Planning Authority.

**Neil Stewart
12th November 2003**

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