
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

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

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

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSED: **DEMOLITION OF EXISTING DWELLING AND ERECTION OF NEW DWELLING, ALLT DRUIDH, INVERDRUIE, AVIEMORE**

REFERENCE: **03/152/CP**

APPLICANT: **MR. & MRS. DEMPSTER, C/O A.W. LAING, 110 HIGH STREET, GRANTOWN-ON-SPEY**

DATE CALLED-IN: **5 JANUARY 2004**



Fig. 1 - Location Plan

SITE DESCRIPTION AND PROPOSAL

1. Full planning permission is sought for the demolition of an existing single storey house, located adjacent to the B970 (Aviemore to Cairngorm Mountain Road) at Inverdrue (see Fig.1.), and its replacement with a new single storey dwelling. From details provided by the applicant, the existing property was built sometime in the late 1920s/early 1930s. It is a Spiers of Glasgow kit house of timber construction which is harled (white) on metal lathing externally. The pitched roof is clad with diamond shaped asbestos tiles and the external timberwork has been painted red (see Fig. 2.). To the rear of the property are some mature pine trees and a timber garage. Access is taken via a shared drive from the B970 to the west side of the property and there is a hedge along the front boundary. The property to the west side is a stone and slate building which now accommodates the offices and visitor centre of Rothiemurchus Estate. To the immediate east side is another stone and slate house. A side road leads eastwards away from the main road into a wooded area where there are several more modern houses positioned.



Fig. 2 - Existing House

2. The replacement house is larger in footprint size but positioned on the site of the existing house. Amendments to some aspects of the design have been sought and received. The house is to be finished in a wet harl with timber framed windows and concrete roof tiles. The drawings also show synthetic stone quoins to the four corners. However, the applicant has agreed to remove these from the design.

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, are compatible with service provision, make use of brownfield sites, impact on resources such as habitats, landscape and cultural heritage, and demonstrate sensitive siting and high quality design in keeping with local character and historic and natural environments.

4. Policy 6.9.1. of the Badenoch and Strathspey Local Plan states that the character and identity of Inverdrurie and Coylumbridge will be safeguarded, including woodlands, open spaces, footpaths and land liable to flooding or erosion by river action. Residential or tourist-related development of remaining gap sites will be encouraged consistent with these considerations and services. Further infill along the ski road frontage will be resisted.

CONSULTATIONS

5. No consultations have been carried out.

REPRESENTATIONS

6. No letters of representation have been received.

APPRAISAL

7. Members of the Committee called-in this planning application on 5 January 2004. In the interests of conserving and enhancing the cultural heritage of the area, it was felt that the demolition of an existing building which may have been of some architectural significance, and its replacement with a new, more modern house type, may have raised issues of general significance to the collective aims of the National Park.
8. There are three main issues which are relevant to the consideration of this proposal. The first relates to the principle of allowing the demolition of the existing building. On initial inspection of the property, and in visual terms, it does appear that it does display some architectural character. However, on closer inspection of the house, both internally and externally, it is clear that the property is substandard in terms of its structural condition and its constructional qualities. In terms of its visual quality, it is also not of a high standard. The applicants had originally proposed to upgrade and extend the existing building, but following professional advice, it was discovered that to do so would still result in a substandard building by modern standards with little likelihood of getting a mortgage or loan. At my request, in order to demonstrate the poor quality of the existing structure, a surveyors report has been submitted. This confirms the problems the building has at present, including the poor quality of the roof coverings, cracking in the external harling, lack of insulation, rotten woodwork, gaps around window frames and evidence of water ingress. In its present state, the report advises that it would not be suitable for mortgage security purposes, unless new walls and a roof were erected to comply with Building Regulations. The report concludes that the best way forward is to demolish and rebuild.
9. The site is not located within a conservation area, nor is the building listed. As described above, it is not of any architectural or historic significance and there are problems with the quality of the building in terms of its construction. As

such, the principle of demolishing the building and replacing it is found to be acceptable.

10. The second issue is that of the design of the replacement house. Either side of the site are older buildings constructed and finished in stone and slate. Further away from the main road are more modern types. However, these are tucked away within trees and are not visible from the main road. The initial submission shows a bungalow style with a mixture of single, double and triple window configurations and an external chimney. Within the National Park and in line with planning policy, there is an expectation that high quality designs are required for new buildings. Bearing in mind the site's position adjacent to existing traditional buildings on a main tourist route, amendments have been sought to enhance the overall appearance of the proposed house. The revisions achieved include an internal chimney, changes to the window configurations and types, and the addition of timberwork to the front and rear gables. The applicant is also agreeable to the removal of the synthetic stone quoins. These amendments do improve the overall appearance of the new house and provide a character that reflects more of the character of the existing. However, there remains an issue relating to the roof finishings. The drawings indicate concrete roof tiles and the applicant wishes to use this type of tile rather than slate, due to cost restrictions. I accept that the existing house has a poor quality roof covering (asbestos tiles) but the existence of the slate roofed buildings either side, and the prominent nature of the site, provide a good reason for requiring slate or at least a good quality slate look-alike tile. The issue of cost is not a material planning consideration. In order to allow a determination of the application, my suggestion is that a suspensive condition is imposed requiring the roof finish to be slate or a good slate look-alike tile, details of which should be agreed with the applicant prior to works commencing on site. With this condition and other conditions relating to finishes, the design of the replacement house is found to be acceptable in the overall context of its surroundings.
11. The third and final issue relates to the trees within the rear garden area of the site. These are mature pine trees some of which are located within 5-10m of the existing house. The applicants are concerned about the trees from a safety point of view and they would prefer to see them removed and replaced with more suitable ones. It is certainly the case that the trees could be considered a safety hazard due to their proximity to the dwelling. This will be even more of a concern during the construction phase and I agree that the existence of trees of this type and size, on a modest sized plot, are not appropriate in the long term. With the overall context surrounding the site being one of wooded character, the loss of some of these trees, while unfortunate, would not have a significant detrimental affect on the wider character of the area. I therefore would be willing to agree to the removal of some of the trees, in the first instance, subject to replacement tree planting. Consideration of further tree removal could be carried out at later date, subject to an appropriate assessment of their quality and potential for causing a safety hazard by a qualified arboriculturalist. Conditions can be applied to this effect.

12. To conclude, the proposal complies with the policies of the adopted Structure and Local Plans and subject to suitable planning conditions, the proposal is found to be acceptable.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE AIMS OF THE NATIONAL PARK

Conserve and Enhance the Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Area

13. The site lies within the settlement boundaries of Inverdrue where there are no constraints in relation to natural or cultural heritage. The removal of this house, which has little architectural or historic significance, its replacement with the revised house type and the removal of a limited number of trees, will have no significant detrimental impacts in relation to the natural or cultural heritage of the area.

Promote Sustainable Use of Resources

14. There are no direct implications, positive or negative, in terms of this aim.

Promote Understanding and Enjoyment of the Area

15. There are no direct implications, positive or negative, in terms of this aim.

Promote Sustainable Economic Development of the Area's Communities

16. There are no direct implications, positive or negative, in terms of this aim.

RECOMMENDATION

That Members of the Committee support a recommendation to:

Grant Full Planning Permission, subject to the following conditions:-

- i. The development to which this permission relates must be begun within five years from the date of this permission.
- ii. Notwithstanding the details shown on the approved drawing, the proposed roofing materials shall be slate or slate look-alike. Exact details and specifications of the roofing materials shall be submitted for the further written approval of the Planning Authority prior to any works commencing on site.
- iii. Notwithstanding the details shown on the approved drawing, the quoins are hereby not approved. The walls shall be finished in a wet harl, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Planning Authority.

- iv. Prior to the commencement of the wall rendering works, a sample panel, approximately 1 metre square, of the wet harling, as required by Condition No. 3 above, shall be prepared on site for the inspection and further written approval of the Planning Authority.
- v. That from the date at which this planning permission is granted, no trees on the site, other than the two trees positioned closest to the dwelling, shall be felled, without the prior written approval of the Planning Authority. Any request to carry out further tree felling on the site shall be submitted in writing to the Planning Authority and shall be accompanied by an assessment of their condition and safety risk, prepared by a qualified arboriculturist.
- vi. No development shall commence on site until the trees to be retained, as required by Condition No. 5 above, have been protected by chestnut paling fencing erected around the extremities of the crowns of the trees to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority.
- vii. Unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Planning Authority, trees that are permitted to be felled on the site shall be replaced elsewhere on the site, on at least a one-to-one basis. The replacement tree planting shall be undertaken during the planting season next following the removal of the tree or the completion of the development.

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