

Proposal

The existing dwelling at Knock Cottage, Street of Kincardine requires significant upgrading but a survey has shown that this is not feasible. The proposed development is to build a replacement dwelling within the curtilage of the existing grounds and then to demolish the substandard rear extension and renovate the original stone croft structure as a recreational space. The replacement dwelling is planned to look like a developed agricultural building and overall the proposal allows for the development of a modern living space while retaining the heritage of the existing building.

Context

Knock Cottage is one of the most characterful buildings in Street of Kincardine and has been owned jointly by the Frost and Murray families for over 35 years. The building is used as frequently as possible, although use is restricted in the winter by lack of adequate heating and insulation – it is not commercially let. A planning application to build a replacement dwelling and then part demolish and renovate the original section of the existing dwelling for recreational use has been called in by the Cairngorm National Park Authority. This document sets out the reasons that the Frost and Murray families believe that we should be allowed to proceed with the development.

Background

The existing structure of Knock Cottage is high maintenance with damp, rot and a roof structure in need of replacement. The front section is a stone built construction, although with unusually thin (350mm) walls, while the rear extension is a post and rubble construction. Having considered several options we concluded that renovating the existing structure to comply to current Building and Insulations Regulations as a dwelling would be uneconomic and might not even be possible (see report of structural survey performed by John Albiston of DM Hall) however we still have a strong desire to retain the heritage of the original section of the building. This consideration led us to submit an application for a replacement house within the curtilage of the existing building.

The design of the replacement building is intended to enhance and complement the existing structure and to look like a renovated agricultural building from the public aspects and uses the existing structure to shield public sightlines from the more contemporary features (which are included to give light and passive solar heating gain).

Planning Considerations

This planning application will be primarily considered under Policy H3 (Housing in the Countryside) of the Highland Council structure plan and section 2.1.2 of the Badenoch and Strathspey Local Plan.

As a general point, Policy H3 is concerned with new development which is not relevant to this application as it is for a replacement dwelling. Policy H3 is also clarified in the document March 2006 Development Plan Policy Guideline "Housing in the Countryside" and Street of Kincardine will be either an Existing Settlement, a Housing Group as defined in section 3. Development is permitted in Existing Settlements and Housing Groups and so this would not present an obstacle to our application. If Street of Kincardine does not fall into the previous categories then it will be categorised as Open Countryside and there is provision within point 4 for:

"replacement of an existing dwelling which does not meet the requirements for modern living and where the costs of upgrading are not justified on economic or environmental grounds (subject to the existing dwellings being demolished)."

The structural survey performed by John Albiston of DM Hall makes the case that "the existing house is not reasonably or economically capable of being reinstated/renovated to a habitable condition for occupation" and all other criteria relevant to point 4 will be satisfied by our application. The only issue for our application would appear to be the fact that we do not propose to demolish the historic section of the existing building. Our strong desire here is to retain the heritage of this building but no longer to use it as a dwelling and we would be open to conditions placed on use of this rather than demolition.

Not adopted
by CNPA

The design and siting of our proposal meets the requirements in section 2.1.2 of the Badenoch and Strathspey Local Plan however section 2.1.2.3 identifies Street of Kincardine as an area where "drainage/ground conditions/access are considered to be suspect" and so there is a strong presumption against development of houses. There will not be an undue additional burden on services and access as the existing arrangements will be retained, upgraded as necessary to comply to current regulations and transferred to the replacement house so this application should not be rejected due to a service restriction. The ground condition is considered good and AF Cruden have been instructed to produce a drainage design.