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# CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

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

**Prepared by:** MARY GRIER, PLANNING OFFICER  
(DEVELOPMENT CONTROL)

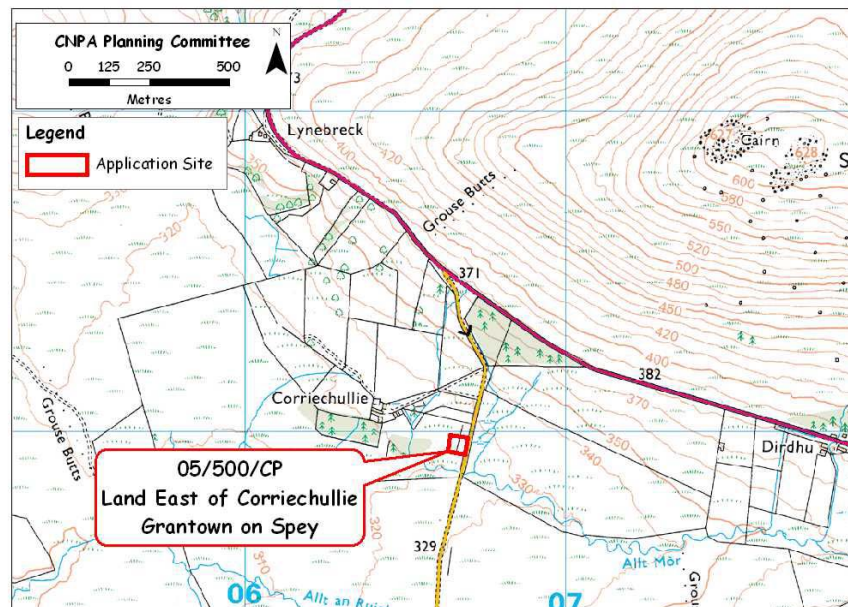
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**DEVELOPMENT PROPOSED:** APPROVAL OF RESERVED MATTERS FOR A DWELLING HOUSE AND GARAGE (AMENDED SCHEME) AT CORRIECHULLIE, GRANTOWN-ON-SPEY

**REFERENCE:** 05/500/CP

**APPLICANT:** MR. DEREK JOHNSON,  
C/O A.W. LAING, 110 HIGH STREET,  
GRANTOWN ON SPEY, PH26 3EL

**DATE CALLED-IN:** 16<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2005



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**Fig. 1 - Location Plan**

## SITE DESCRIPTION AND PROPOSAL

1. This application is an approval of reserved matters for the erection of a dwelling house, where outline permission was granted under Highland Council planning reference no. 02/00316/OUTBS in June 2004. The proposed development site is located on land at Corriechullie adjacent to the minor road linking Nethy Bridge with the A939. The proposed site is located on open land approximately 126 metres south of the access track leading to Corriechullie farm. There is an existing coniferous plantation located some distance to the west of the proposed site, and in partial fulfilment of the conditions of the outline permission a programme of planting has also been undertaken to the north of the subject land, and the planted area has recently been enclosed by stock proof fencing. The land to the north rises towards the A939 and beyond to Sgor Gaoithe and the Hills of Cromdale. The site is exposed and highly visible on the western and eastern approaches of the A939 and also on the southern approach from the direction of Nethy Bridge, as well as from wider areas of the surrounding countryside. The settlement pattern in the area is generally dispersed, and consists primarily of older housing stock of traditional design.



**Fig. 2 : proposed site (foreground – left) as viewed on the southern approach from Nethy Bridge**

2. The proposed site is approximately 0.5 acres, with a road frontage of 40 metres. The actual site area consists of rough grassland adjacent to the public road and is devoid of any natural boundaries. The roadside boundary is formed by a relatively low post and wire fence. The proposed dwelling house is located towards the rear of the site (7.6 metres from the rear boundary), with a central access drive proposed to extend approximately 30 metres from the public road, with a relatively large hard standing area to the front of the proposed dwelling and domestic garage. The dwelling house proposed on the site is a single storey structure, of relatively traditional design, with a simple projecting porch in the front elevation accommodating the front

entrance. The structure also includes a rearward projection in the south western corner, accommodating a kitchen and utility room. The frontage of the proposed dwelling extends to almost 20 metres. However, its elongated nature is masked by the fact that the northern section of the structure is stepped back from the main building line, as well as having a slightly lower ridge line. The majority of the dwelling is proposed to have a wet harl finish. Stone quoins are also proposed, together with a stone finish on the front porch and the projecting rear section, all under a slate roof finish. Traditional sash and case windows, with a vertical emphasis, are proposed throughout the property. The proposal also includes a detached domestic garage, located northward of the dwelling house, with finishes to match the proposed dwelling house.

3. The property is to be served by a septic tank in conjunction with a soakaway pit or perforated pipe system. A spring at Sgor Gaoithe, on the hillside north of the site, would provide a private water supply.

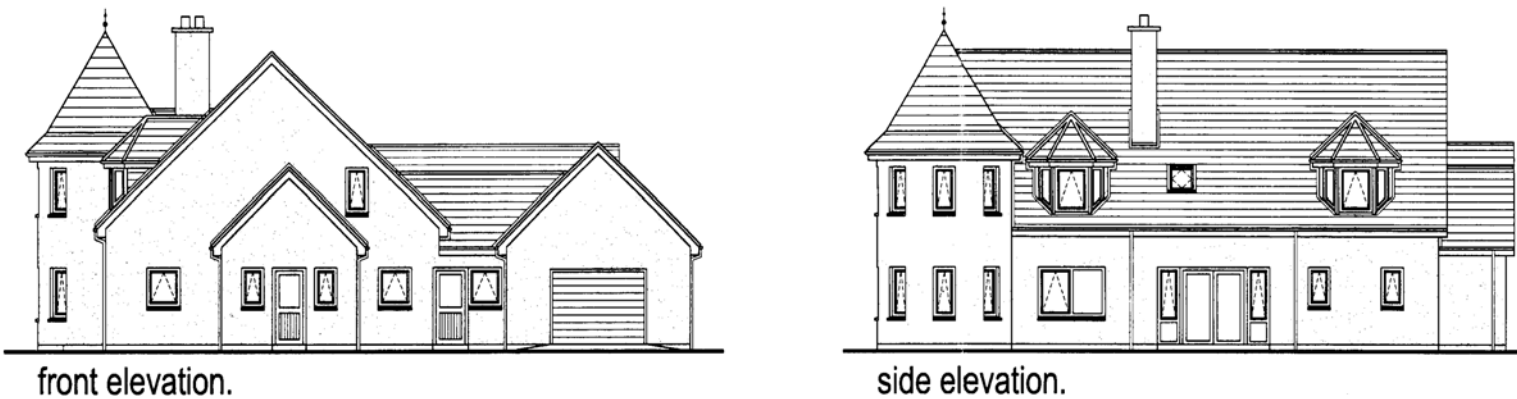


Fig. 3 : Previously refused dwelling house (CNPA planning ref. no. 05/275/CP)

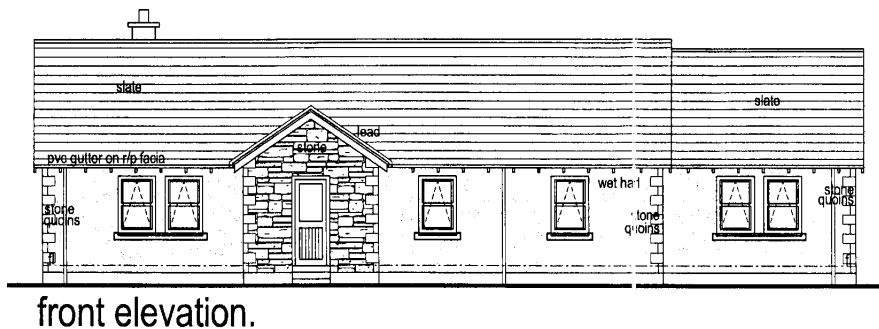


Fig. 4 : Front elevation of currently proposed dwelling house.

4. An application for approval of reserved matters (CNPA planning ref. no. 05/275/CP) for a dwelling house on the site had previously been submitted and was refused by the Planning Committee of the CNPA at its meeting of 26<sup>th</sup> August 2005 primarily on the grounds of inappropriate form, character and design in this open and exposed setting (see Fig. 3).
5. The reports on file relating to the outline planning permission on the site (02/00316/OUTBS) indicate that planning officials advised that the proposed development was contrary to the provisions of the Local Plan and Members of the planning committee were accordingly asked to define the reasons for approving the application as a departure from the provision of the Development Plan. The outline planning permission approved included a number of conditions, including requirements on the achievement of visibility splays, dwelling house design guidance, and a requirement to enter into a Section 75 agreement. The Section 75 agreement required the submission of a detailed scheme providing for the planting of trees and all other vegetation, and the carrying out of the planting scheme within two years of the date of the granting of outline planning permission. The planting scheme submitted proposed birch, rowan and Caledonian Scots pine over a significant extent of the planted area, with smaller quantities of juniper, oak, holly, hawthorn and alder. Highland Council upon consideration of the planting scheme advised that planting be undertaken at a quantity of 2000 per hectare. The area of land that has been planted in fulfilment of the Section 75 agreement is located a short distance to the north of the proposed site, and extends in an L shape to the west of the site. Although significant numbers of trees have been planted, they are not of a mature height at present and do not yet assist in providing any screening in the vicinity of the proposed site.
6. The condition included in the outline planning permission regarding design issues stipulated that the proposed dwelling house be no more than one and a half storeys in height, with the walls off white in colour and the roof finished with a natural slate or an approved slate like grey tile.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Condition no. 6 of 02/00316/OUTBS stated that “Unless otherwise approved in writing by the Planning Authority the house hereby approved shall be no more than one and a half storeys in height with a roof pitch of no less than 30 degrees and no more than 45 degrees. The walls of the approved house shall be off white in colour and the roof shall be finished with natural slate or an approved slate like grey tile. All windows shall have a vertical emphasis. The overall width of the gable shall not be less than the height of the wall from the ground to the eaves level, nor shall the overall width of the gable be more than 2.5 the height of the wall from ground to eaves level. For the purposes of this condition only, ground level is to be taken as a fixed external point measured 100 millimetres below finished floor level of the house with a solid ground floor or 300 millimetres below the finished floor level of the house with a suspended ground floor.”

## DEVELOPMENT PLAN CONTEXT

7. At national level, **Scottish Planning Policy 3 (Planning for Housing) (February 2003)** considers design in new housing developments to be an important issue when planning for housing development in both urban and rural areas. **Planning Advice Note 44 (Fitting New Housing Development into the Landscape) (March 1994)** states that *“In seeking to protect and enhance the quality of the environment, developers should aim for a high standard of design and landscaping in new housing development.”* Particular emphasis is given to the shape, layout and form of the development and its impact on the surrounding area; the choice of materials, with colours and textures that complement development in the locality; well designed schemes that respect both the local environment and the landscape setting; and the visual impact of new developments as seen from major roads and rail routes.
8. **Planning Advice Note 67 (Housing Quality) (February 2003)** emphasises the essential role the planning process can play in ensuring that the design of new housing reflects a full understanding of its context in terms of both its physical location and market conditions; the design of new housing reinforces local and Scottish identity; and new housing is integrated into the movement and settlement patterns of the wider area. It refers in the main to more urban housing developments but it nonetheless emphasise the importance of general issues such as landscape and visual impact, topography, building height, relationship with adjacent development, and views into and out of a site.
9. **Planning Advice Note 72** is the new advice from central government on **Housing in the Countryside, (February 2005)** and on design it states *“High quality design must be integral to new development and local area differences must be respected”*. Furthermore it states *“In some areas, such as National Parks, National Scenic Areas and Conservation Areas, there may be a case for more prescription and a preference for traditional design, but it is also important to encourage the best of contemporary designs. There is considerable scope for creative and innovative solutions whilst relating a new home to the established character of the area. The overall aim should be to ensure that new housing is carefully located, worthy of its setting, and is the result of an imaginative, responsive and sensitive design process.”* In its concluding remarks, it states *“Every settlement should have its own distinctive identity. This is determined in part by the local characteristics of the area’s architectural style of individual buildings and the relationship of these buildings to each other.”*

10. **Highland Structure Plan 2001, Policy H3** states that housing will generally be within existing and planned new settlements. New housing will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that it is required for the management of land and related family purposes. **Policy L4 Landscape Character**, states that the Council will in the consideration of development proposals have regard to the desirability of maintaining and enhancing present landscape character. **Policy G2 Design for Sustainability**, lists a number of criteria on which proposed developments will be assessed. These include service provision (water and sewerage, drainage, roads, schools, electricity); accessibility by public transport, cycling, walking and car; energy efficiency in terms of location, layout and design (including the utilisation of renewable energy sources) and impacts on resources such as habitats, species, landscape, cultural heritage and scenery.
11. Highland Council's **Development Plan Policy Guidelines (April 2003)** provides more detailed guidance on the interpretation of specific policies contained in the 1997 Local Plan, in the light of the subsequently approved Structure Plan of 2001. This document states that new housing in the open countryside will be exceptional, and will only be permitted (in accordance with National guidance and the approved Structure Plan policy) where, amongst other specific circumstances, it is required for the management of land, or it is required for family purposes related to the management of land (retired farmers and their spouses).
12. **The Badenoch and Strathspey Local Plan (September 1997)** – the subject site is on land that has been identified in the Local Plan as a restricted countryside area. Accordingly, section 2.1.2.3 of the Plan reconfirms the sentiments of the Structure Plan policy stating that a “strong presumption will be maintained against the development of houses” in all sensitive areas. It further stresses that adherence to the principles of good siting and design will be required.

## CONSULTATIONS

13. As the principal of a dwelling house on the subject site has been established through the granting of outline planning permission, issues such as road access and servicing of the proposed development were assessed by the relevant organisations and officials in the course of the original application. The proposed site is not located within any designated sites.

## REPRESENTATIONS

14. No representations have been received in respect of the proposed development.

## APPRAISAL

15. The land on which the dwelling is proposed is highly visible and prominent when viewed from much of the surrounding countryside area, including higher ground to the north, and the eastern and western approaches of the A939, as well as the southern approach to the subject site along the minor road from the direction of Dorback and Nethy Bridge. Having regard to this proposed siting within such a highly visible area of the Cairngorms National Park, grave concern was expressed in the course of the previously refused application regarding the potential implications of an inappropriately designed dwelling. Following the refusal of that planning permission, where reference was made to the development detracting from the enjoyment of the rural qualities of this area of the park by the general public and creating a prominent precedent for unsympathetically designed new development in the National Park, extensive discussions were undertaken between the CNPA and the applicants agents in an effort to achieve an appropriate dwelling house design capable of overcoming previously expressed concerns.



**Fig. 4 : views of the site from the north west**



**Fig. 5 : views of the site from the eastern A939 approach**

16. The currently proposed dwelling house differs dramatically from that previously refused. The entire design concept has been altered and now introduces a lower level design based on a simple footprint, essentially elongated in form, but visually broken up through the introduction of a stepped front building line and roof line and the use of stonework on some areas of the property. It replaces the previously proposed concept of a 1 ½ / 2 storey structure, which was significantly larger in scale and incorporated a complex mix of design features, including a mock baronial turret / tower.
17. The simple form and the more modest scale of the dwelling now proposed on the site, together with the incorporation of vernacular features appropriate to this area, including vertically proportioned windows, and the use of materials of slate, wet harl and natural stone, has resulted in a proposal that displays a greater cognisance of its prominent siting. It represents an enhanced attempt to create a building that more closely reflects the local characteristics of the area's architectural style of individual buildings. Nonetheless, I remain somewhat sceptical about the appropriateness of any building on this exposed site. The proposed development will quite evidently appear as a new building in this open landscape, and recent planting is unlikely to have any tangible effect for many years to come and the development will undeniably have some visual impact. The site remains stark and significant levels of landscaping within it are essential and accordingly I suggest that a condition be included in the event of the granting of planning permission requiring the carrying out of extensive landscaping, using species appropriate to this rugged rural setting. In conclusion, it must be borne in mind that the principle of a dwelling house on this site has already been established through the granting of outline permission, and the currently proposed design will undoubtedly have less visual impact than that previously proposed. Efforts have been made in the design process to evolve the concept beyond a stereotypical 'new build bungalow' and the proposal now represents an attempt to establish a more appropriate visual relationship with other residential properties existing in the surrounding rural landscape.

## **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE AIMS OF THE NATIONAL PARK**

### **Conserve and Enhance the Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Area**

18. There are no natural heritage designations on the proposed site. The proposal is not however considered to make any positive contribution to the conservation or enhancement of the natural or cultural heritage of the area.



### **Promote Sustainable Use of Natural Resources**

19. The materials proposed in the dwelling house are not considered to have any particular potential to promote the sustainable use of natural resources.

### **Promote Understanding and Enjoyment of the Area**

20. Regardless of the design concept, the subject site is located in a prominent and visible location and any development occurring at this location would be likely to have a visual impact. However, the currently proposed design is more in keeping with traditional architectural styles and subject to landscaping it is unlikely to be detrimental to the understanding or enjoyment of the area by the general public.

### **Promote Sustainable Economic and Social Development of the Area**

21. In general the location of the proposed dwelling house in open countryside, remote from any settlement and community / educational / retail facilities is not considered to assist in the promotion of sustainable economic development. However, in this instance the principle of residential development has already been established on the site through the granting of outline planning permission.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

That Members of the Committee support a recommendation to:

**Grant permission for the Approval of Reserved Matters for a New Dwellinghouse and garage on land at Corriechullie, Grantown-on-Spey, subject to the following conditions :**

1. The development hereby approved shall be commenced prior to 27 January 2008.
2. This approval relates solely to the reserved matters referred to in the outline planning permission Highland Council reference number 02/316/OUTBS. Nothing contained in this proposal or this notice shall be deemed to affect or vary the conditions imposed on that outline planning permission.
3. That notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Scotland) Order 1992, no house extension shall be formed, and no greenhouse, shed, garage (other than the one approved) or other structure shall be erected without the prior written consent of the Planning Authority.

4. That notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Scotland) Order 1992, no fences or walling (other than those approved) shall be erected on the site without the prior written consent of the Planning Authority.
5. Prior to the commencement of development, a detailed landscaping plan, including details of all proposed boundary treatments, shall be submitted for the agreement and written approval of the CNPA acting as Planning Authority. The landscaping shall be implemented and maintained in accordance with the approved plan. The plan shall include details of the siting, numbers, species (which shall be appropriate to the rural setting) and heights (at the time of planting) of all trees, shrubs and hedges to be planted and to the extent of any areas of earthmounding, and shall ensure:-
  - (a) Completion of the scheme during the planting season next following the completion of the development, or such other date as may be agreed in writing with the CNPA acting as Planning Authority.
  - (b) The maintenance of the landscaped areas in perpetuity in accordance with the detailed maintenance schedule/table. Any trees or shrubs removed, or which in the opinion of the CNPA acting as Planning Authority, are dying, being severely damaged or becoming seriously diseased within three years of planting, shall be replaced by trees or shrubs of similar size and species to those originally required to be planted.
6. All windows and external doors in the dwelling house and domestic garage shall be timber. All windows shall closely resemble sash and case units.
7. Prior to the commencement of the wall rendering works, a sample panel, approximately 1 metre square, of the wet harling shall be prepared on site for the inspection and further written approval of the CNPA acting as Planning Authority.
8. The proposed stone finish, including quoins, shall consist of natural stone only. Prior to the commencement of development, details of the stonework shall be submitted for the agreement and written approval of the CNPA acting as Planning Authority.
9. Prior to the commencement works on site, exact details of the finishing materials for all external hard landscaping, including the drives, parking and turning areas, and footpaths shall be submitted for the further written approval of the CNPA acting as Planning Authority.
10. The garage hereby approved shall be used only for domestic purposes incidental to the enjoyment of the dwellinghouse.

11. Prior to the commencement of works on site, exact details of the proposed garage door material and colour shall be submitted for the agreement and written approval of the CNPA acting as Planning Authority.

**Mary Grier**  
**Planning Officer, Development Control.**

**18<sup>th</sup> January 2006**

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The map on the first page of this report has been produced to aid in the statutory process of dealing with planning applications. The map is to help identify the site and its surroundings and to aid Planning Officers, Committee Members and the Public in the determination of the proposal. Maps shown in the Planning Committee Report can only be used for the purposes of the Planning Committee. Any other use risks infringing Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Maps produced within this Planning Committee Report can only be reproduced with the express permission of the Cairngorms National Park Authority and other Copyright holders. This permission must be granted in advance.