
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

Title: REPORT ON CALLED-IN PLANNING APPLICATION

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DEVELOPMENT PROPOSED: OUTLINE PLANNING PERMISSION FOR THE ERECTION OF A 2 STOREY, 50 BED NURSING HOME AT BURNSIDE, AVIEMORE

REFERENCE: 08/443/CP

APPLICANT: RATHVEN INVESTMENTS, GHUILBIN HOUSE, GRAMPIAN ROAD, AVIEMORE

DATE CALLED-IN: 9th JANUARY 2009

RECOMMENDATION: APPROVAL



Fig. 1 Location Plan



Fig. 2 Site looking East from A9 embankment



Fig. 3 Site frontage (to right) looking North West



Fig. 4 Amended Site Boundary



Fig. 5 Indicative Site Layout (un-amended site boundary)

SITE DESCRIPTION AND PROPOSAL

The site measures approximately 0.8has. and is located immediately to the West of the new single storey houses with dormers at Allt Mor, Edenkillie, Burnside Aviemore. To the North lies an open field and houses at the Sheiling off the B9192,

Grantown Road. To the West is part of the Aviemore Orbital path and the embankment of the A9. Maturing deciduous trees on the A9 embankment provide a good partial screen. The new underpass passes into the new housing area at Upper Burnside. To the South lies residential property including a block of 6 flats on two stories, presently under construction.

The site slopes gently down to the South East and has expansive views out to the North, East and South. It is presently occupied by the sales offices of Tulloch Homes but is otherwise made up of cleared ground and stored earth from the adjacent new housing developments. There are no trees on the site other than new screen planting adjacent to the new houses at Allt Mor. A temporary path runs through the site to connect the Orbital (East) with the houses at Burnside.

It is proposed to erect a two storey nursing home containing 50 bedrooms and support accommodation. The outline application seeks approval of the principle of development only, with all other matters reserved. The indicative plan shows a single building placed centrally in the site and orientated to face South East. A service yard and boiler room are indicated at the East end of the building and a total of 38 car parking spaces and a drop off point are shown to the front of the building. Access is indicated via a short service road ending in the service yard.

The applicant has indicated that the site would be offered to a national nursing home provider and discussions are on-going. It is anticipated that this would provide residential nursing care for the elderly and is likely to include a dementia unit. He has indicated a willingness to procure a building designed and constructed to current Care Commission best practice, including measures to minimize energy use and emissions. He has also indicated that a professional landscape scheme for the site would aim to enhance the building and the amenity of the area as well as protecting the amenity and privacy of adjacent residential neighbours, whilst providing suitable outdoor spaces and paths for the future elderly residents.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN CONTEXT

Cairngorms National Park Plan 2007

Strategic objectives for living and working in the Park address the economic and social needs of those resident in the park. These objectives should be consistent with the conservation and enhancement of the special qualities of the Park. A sustainable community encourages a population level and mix that meets the current and future needs of its communities, with a focus on the main settlements. The objectives include the provision of local services that meet the needs of the communities.

The Highland Structure Plan 2001

The Structure Plan states that access to a range of services and facilities is an important aspect of quality of life. Their existence also helps to support the local economy. Aviemore is not listed in the current structure plan as a local centre to

which such services might be directed and a nursing home is not specifically listed as a community facility appropriate to either a sub-regional or local centre.

Policy HI Housing Allocations for Areas 1998 – 2017 states that provision will be made in local plans for a supply of land that accords with specified figures, taking account of existing land allocations and infrastructure capacities.

Policy SI Services and Facilities states that the Council will aim to retain or supplement service and facility provision in regional, sub-regional and local centres to support the communities they serve.

Recommendation S3 Health and Social Work Services recommends that private, public and voluntary bodies co-operate with the strategies contained in the Joint Community Care Plan to provide a range of residential and domiciliary services for all sectors of the community.

The Badenoch and Strathspey Local Plan 1997

The site is defined as amenity woodland and contains part of a small site (0.2 ha. total) identified for community purposes. Planning permission was given for a pub-restaurant but this has lapsed and the land owner does not intend to pursue it.

In its strategy, the Plan identifies a need for better facilities for the care of the elderly. Aviemore is not specifically identified as a principal service centre but the plan recognises that it is attracting some higher order functions and enjoys several advantages in terms of future provision related to its growth and centrality. It is therefore identified as the main growth point, including community and social facilities. A sufficient choice of development land to meet housing opportunities for all needs is required.

Para. 6.1.2 Main Village Expansion Areas identifies Edenkillie as an expansion area suitable for a mix of housing and community facilities, with a capacity for 70 - 100 houses. Siting will require to retain the woodland habitat and ensure that dwellings are satisfactorily integrated into the landform.

Para. 6.5.1 Amenity Woodland and Trees identifies a priority to secure the early introduction of major tree compartments to the North of the village.

CONSULTATIONS

Area Roads Manager recommends that a Traffic Impact Assessment is undertaken with reference to the Edenkillie/B9152 road junction. This may be undertaken prior to the Reserved Matters application. A contribution towards local public bus services is required. A full SUDS scheme and internal road to Roads Guidelines standards are required although the internal road will not be considered for adoption. Conditions for the access are listed (Officer's Note: the access point is not part of the outline application as amended, therefore the conditions will pertain to the reserved matters).

Scottish Water no objection.

SEPA objects to the application on the grounds that no scheme for SUDS drainage has been submitted. Land is available and a condition requiring details as reserved matters is recommended.

Highland Council Archaeology no objection.

Highland Council Social Work no response.

SE Highland Community Care no response

Aviemore Medical Practice corroborates the need for the facility in Aviemore. They express some concerns about the location of the proposal and its size, being bounded by building land and the A9 corridor, with the risk of any widening of the A9 encroaching further into the site. A single storey building with single bedrooms grouped round small lounges, dining and quiet rooms represents current trends (such as at Cradlehall, Inverness). Adequate garden facilities are also required. Similar facilities with 30 beds are planned alongside the new medical centre for Aviemore.

Aviemore and Vicinity Community Council believes that Aviemore needs a nursing home and does not object to the application. Concerns are expressed about the limited staff parking and no laundrette facilities in the description. (Officer's note: a laundry, if on site, would ancillary to the nursing home use.

Economic and Social Development: the Economic Development Officer considers that a nursing home of this size is a considerable addition to the local economy, offering skilled and semi-skilled employment and demand for local services. Demand for a nursing home and any adverse impacts on existing provision should be considered. The Housing Officer also comments on the need for the home and the need to engage the support of the local general practitioners and social work department. Data on homes in the region have been supplied by the Care Commission.

Heritage and Landscape Management: a prominent site at edge of settlement, requiring careful design treatment. No ecological observations. (verbal comments).

REPRESENTATIONS

Seven letters, including two from the same person, have been received from Nos. 24 to 31 Allt Mor and from Carn Mhor, The Sheiling, expressing concern that that the proposal does not correspond with the statutory allocation of the site for amenity, about the scale of the building on rising land to the rear of their houses, a commercial use in a residential area, light, noise and servicing 24 hours per day, congestion on the access road, lack of water and sewerage in Aviemore, overlooking and over-shadowing, drainage run-off, loss of value and holiday rental income, on-going maintenance of the landscaped strip to the rear of Allt Mor and a proper assessment of the need for the nursing home. Residents have sought control of the landscape strip for incorporation in their gardens. A high screen fence and relocation and screening of the service yard are suggested by some residents.

In support of the application, the applicant's agent lists only five care homes in Badenoch and Strathspey. None of these are in Aviemore and it is believed that none meet current Care Commission standards. It is understood that Grant House in Granttown-on-Spey is due for a major refurbishment to modern standards, leaving a short term deficit in provision. It is distressing for a resident and inconvenient for family members supporting a resident to have to leave their home area to find suitable care. Aviemore is a growing centre and care home provision is justified by the level of housing growth.

APPRAISAL

The Principle of the Development

Although not specified as such in the statutory Development Plan, it is evident from the housing growth directed to Aviemore and its promotion as an economic hub in the Park area, that it is taking on the mantle of a local centre. It is also recognised that facilities such as nursing homes are increasingly needed by an ageing population. The current or future precise demand for nursing home beds in central Speyside is not known but it has been stated that there is a shortage of beds and it is thought that the 50 beds proposed and the 30 bed unit, proposed as part of a new medical centre may not, together, meet demand in the future. The nearest current provision is in Grantown or Kingussie, although these facilities require upgrading to modern standards and cannot at present provide for the modern care of dementia patients. Otherwise, services are available as far away as Inverness. This is not conducive to the wellbeing of potentially confused or distressed residents, or their families.

The site is allocated for amenity in the statutory Local plan, with a small part allocated for community facilities such as a local pub. However, this pre-dates the significant development of surrounding land for housing since the plan was adopted, in a more comprehensive manner than envisaged by the plan. The site has been cleared and remodelled and no longer represents the amenity envisaged by the plan. Its most logical alternative use would be housing land, with amenity being provided by undeveloped land to the North, along the fringes of the Orbital path and by landscaped blocks within the residential area. It is not specifically required to meet the housing land supply as there are proposals for considerable housing land allocations in Aviemore.

A nursing home is a particular kind of residential use that is often located in a residential area. Unlike a residential care home that caters for more ambulant and independent residents, a nursing home does not necessarily need to be located on a flat site near town centre facilities. Reasonably convenient access for support services such as general practitioners etc., visitors, care staff and servicing is necessary and can be provided at the proposed site. The medical centre is near-by. A range of modal types of transport are also necessary. The site is half a kilometre from an existing bus route and the applicants have agreed to a contribution to the possible extension of a town loop service, to include Burnside. The contribution would comprise provision of a bus shelter with real time display facilities, the land for its erection close to the nursing home and a contribution to the first three years of operation of the service. This bus service is dependant on other major developments in the town and cannot go ahead without them.

Site and Neighbour Amenity

The site offers the prospect of a high quality location for residents, with the scope for fine outlooks in all directions and landscaped gardens, linking to the wider Orbital path network. A disadvantage is the potential exposure of the site to noise from the A9 to the North West, although this would be mitigated by the existing

embankment down to the site, which already has maturing tree cover. There is also scope to fully insulate a single building against noise, including the scope for tree planting and a landscaped buffer on the site.

Neighbours to the East and North East are concerned about being overlooked. The gardens of the adjacent houses are very small. The site will be remodelled, removing the much of the perceived slope currently formed by a soil store. These houses were developed with a tree-planted landscaped strip between the site and their rear gardens. The trees are developing but no effective arrangements for access or for maintenance are in place. The strip is in the ownership of the current applicant and the site boundary has been amended to incorporate the strip to ensure that it is preserved and maintained as part of the landscaped grounds of the proposed nursing home. This will provide an effective landscaped screen and amenity for existing residents as well as future residents of the home. A condition to protect this landscape strip is recommended.

Other issues raised by the objectors pertain to the detailed design of the site and will be considered at the reserved matters stage.

Access and Servicing

Access to the site is along Edenkillie Road from the B9152 Grantown Road. This is a residential road and the servicing requirements of a nursing home will add to traffic and delivery vehicles in the vicinity. Access on to the site can be safely formed off the public road. There is likely to be more day time activity than would arise from a housing development at the same site but night time activity is likely to be very limited. It is not considered that the site is incompatible with surrounding houses on traffic noise and servicing grounds provided that the site is designed and managed to minimize any impacts.

Conclusion

The proposal responds to a local need and a short fall in the supply of nursing home beds in a growing centre such as Aviemore. Its location offers prospect for a high amenity design but also presents some challenges in ensuring that the amenities of existing neighbours and future residents of the home are protected. In principle the site is considered suitable for the use proposed provided that steps are taken to protect amenity. These are covered by the recommended conditions. The site is not in the town centre but is reasonably well located for servicing purposes and for access by staff and visitors. The applicant has agreed to make a contribution to a prospective town loop bus service.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE AIMS OF THE PARK

Conserve and Enhance the Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Area

The development presents an opportunity for strategic landscaping at the fringes of Aviemore, enhancing the landscape surroundings of the village.

Promote Sustainable Use of Natural Resources

The design and construction should secure building methods, materials and on-going operating systems consistent with minimizing the impact of the development on the natural environment and emissions. Family and friends will have access to a nearby facility without regular long car journeys. Use of local public transport and cycles will reduce local car journeys to work.

Promote Understanding and Enjoyment

The development provides a facility that will allow elderly residents with particular care needs to stay in the area and enjoy familiar surroundings.

Promote Sustainable Economic and Social Development

The development provides a facility that will sustain the quality of life of residents and their families in support of the social needs of the community. Economic opportunities will arise from the construction, operation, servicing and employment in the nursing home.

RECOMMENDATION

That Members of the Committee agree to a recommendation to:

Grant Outline Planning Permission subject to:

- (i) A unilateral undertaking pertaining to the provision of a contribution to funds towards the extension of the local bus service and a bus stop at Burnside, in accordance with the terms agreed with the Highland Council Public Transport Officer and to be lodged before the issue of outline planning permission;
- (ii) Subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) A formal planning application and detailed plans indicating all matters relating to the siting, design and external appearance of all buildings, means of access thereto, existing and proposed levels across the site, car parking, setting down space, servicing space, cycle and bin storage, means of enclosure and screening and landscaping and resident's garden and paths proposals shall be submitted for the prior approval of the Planning Authority within 3 years of the date of this permission and the development must be commenced within 5 years of the date of this permission or within 2 years from the date of final approval of all the foregoing Reserved Matters.

- 2) Notwithstanding the terms of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes)(Scotland) Order 1997, the use hereby granted shall be restricted to Class 8 Residential Institutions (a) (residential care) or (b) (hospital or nursing home), unless the further express permission of the Planning Authority is given.
- 3) The permission hereby granted shall be restricted to a building or buildings with a maximum of two stories and 50 bed spaces in total, for residents (excluding staff).
- 4) The reserved matters application shall include a detailed energy statement pertaining to the construction (materials and energy saving methods) and future operation of the building. The approved energy and CO2 saving measures shall be implemented in full to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority.
- 5) The reserved matters shall include noise proofing measures to demonstrate the steps taken to protect the built envelop from external sources of noise, in particular, emanating from the A9 trunk road.
- 6) The reserved matters shall include a Drainage Impact Assessment to demonstrate that satisfactory Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems can be provided with no unacceptable impact on the water environment and residential neighbours and can be accommodated on the site. The approved details shall be fully installed prior to the building coming into use.
- 7) The reserved matters shall include a Traffic Impact Assessment to assess the impact of the development on the Edenkillie Road/B9152 junction. Any works found essential to road safety is carried out at the developers expense prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved.
- 8) The reserved matters shall include full landscaping and tree planting proposals, including steps to supplement, reinforce and retain the existing landscape area along the East side of the site and proposals for its extension to Edenkillie Road.

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20th May 2009

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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.