



Conversion and Reuse of Existing Traditional and Vernacular Buildings

Supplementary Planning Guidance

Planning in the Cairngorms National Park

Planning in the Cairngorms National Park is unique. It involves the Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) working alongside the five local authorities which operate in the Park – Aberdeenshire, Angus, Highland, Moray and Perth & Kinross.

Due to the expansion of the National Park in October 2010, to take in part of Perth & Kinross, different planning policies apply there.

The following paragraphs set out what planning policies apply in the National Park, and how planning applications will be dealt with.

Planning Policies

The Cairngorms National Park Local Plan, and this Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG), covers the Aberdeenshire, Angus, Highland and Moray parts of the National Park only. This SPG sets out detailed advice to help you meet the requirements of the policies in the Cairngorms National Park Local Plan. It is recommended that it is read in conjunction with the policies in the Local Plan and other relevant SPG.

The Cairngorms National Park Local Plan and this SPG does not cover the Perth & Kinross area of the Park. The Perth & Kinross Highland Area Local Plan, or the Perth & Kinross Eastern Area Local Plan, and any associated SPG, apply. Please see www.pkc.gov.uk for further information.

Planning applications

All planning applications submitted within the Cairngorms National Park must comply with the relevant Local Plan and SPG (see paragraphs above on planning policies for details).

Planning applications should be submitted to the relevant local authority in the normal manner. The local authority ensures all the necessary information is supplied and registers receipt of the application. The CNPA is informed by the local authority and has 21 days to decide whether to call-in the application. Only applications which are of general significance to the aims of the Park are called-in. The CNPA determines called-in applications. In instances where planning applications are not called-in, the local authority will determine the application.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 This guidance provides additional information relating to Conversion and Reuse of Existing Traditional and Vernacular Buildings, as outlined in Policy 27 in the Cairngorms National Park Local Plan.

Policy 27 Conversion and Reuse of Existing Traditional and Vernacular Buildings

Development proposals for the conversion of existing traditional and vernacular buildings will be permitted where the following criteria are met:

- a) the building is redundant for its original use, and it can be demonstrated that it is unlikely to have a commercial or economic future in its current form; and
- b) the proposal is designed to maintain the style and character of the original building in terms of form, scale, materials and detailing, where they contribute positively to the context and setting of the area.

- 1.2 This policy supports the sympathetic conversion of redundant traditional and vernacular buildings.

2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 Existing traditional and vernacular buildings, typically comprising steadings, mills or other agricultural or industrial outbuildings, often make a significant contribution to the landscape character and cultural heritage of the National Park. The conversion and reuse of such buildings offers opportunity for their conservation and enhancement, bringing them back into effective use. It also recognises the significant embodied energy found within these often substantial buildings. The policy seeks appropriate new uses – residential, commercial or industrial ensuring that alterations are carried out in a sensitive and innovative manner that both conserves and enhances the essential style and character

of each building. Conversions should reinforce the original architectural qualities of a building, while recognising opportunities for innovative, contemporary and sustainable interventions.

3.0 Purpose of this guidance

- 3.1 This guidance aims to provide advice and general considerations, and outlines the information which should be submitted as part of your planning application. It is recommended that it is read in conjunction with other supplementary planning guidance, including the Sustainable Design Guide, which sets out in more detail advice and requirements on siting, design and materials to minimise the environmental impact of development.
- 3.2 In the event that the original building needs reconstruction because of structural issues, the planning authority will assess it against other policies in the Local Plan.

4.0 Design principles – sympathetic conversion

4.1 GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- Where proposals require the conversion, significant alteration or demolition of integral parts or components of the original building, the finished building should not look significantly different from the original.
- In adapting or converting buildings, especially those of historic character, the use of the building should be altered to suit its form, rather than adapted to suit the use. The style and character should be conserved and enhanced, within practical limits. Good conversions reinforce the original architectural qualities of a building.
- In all instances, the footprint and envelope of the existing building should remain dominant. Extensions and modern interventions will be acceptable if the design, siting, layout, materials and style are appropriate.

4.2 ALTERATIONS

- The building's original features and openings should be retained and enhanced where possible. This will ensure a sympathetic approach, whilst recognising modern living standards and sustainable design considerations. The number of additional window openings should be limited. Alterations should be the minimum necessary in order for the building to function adequately in its new use, and should not disguise its original purpose. Ridge heights, wallhead heights and roof profiles should generally not be altered.
- Extensions should be subservient in scale and massing, affording more effective use of the existing building; complimentary materials such as stonework or timber should be utilised to match the existing building.
- The use of existing window and door openings should be integral to the design and layout, and the formation of new openings kept to a minimum – allowing for the character of the building to be retained.
- Roof alterations should generally be avoided. Typically, many traditional and vernacular structures would feature roof lights and few dormer windows, and as such, simple roof forms are preferred.
- Special features, including any ornamental or decorative elements, should be retained or reused as appropriate.
- The reuse of materials is encouraged, including any stone taken down or found on site, and other materials.
- Opportunities for solar gain, micro-renewables or other passive energy opportunities should be investigated.

4.3 ANCILLARY BUILDINGS

- Ancillary buildings in good condition should be retained where possible. Any new buildings should respect the setting of the original building in terms of location, scale and materials.

4.4 BOUNDARY ENCLOSURES, ACCESS AND SERVICES

- Boundary enclosures should be retained where they exist, including dykes, hedgerows or other traditional treatments. High 'suburban style', close-boarded timber fencing or panels should be avoided.
- Car park layouts, including access tracks and driveways should not dominate courtyards and curtilages or detract from the setting of the building.
- Lighting and other services should be sited sensitively and unobtrusively. Light pollution should be minimised.

5.0 Permitted development rights

- The planning authority may consider removing permitted development rights of the new property. If this action is taken, planning permission would subsequently be required for roof lights, conservatories or for other minor alterations, to ensure the character of the development is retained.

6.0 Use of buildings


- 6.1 The conversion should be to a use appropriate for the site and its surroundings. This could include employment, tourism, recreation or housing. The new use should not conflict with existing adjacent land uses and activities. The proposals should strive to retain the original character of the building, the new use being accommodated with as little alteration as is necessary.

7.0 Supporting information

- 7.1 Planning applications for conversion or reuse of a traditional or vernacular building should include the following.
- Justification to support the change of use, renovation and conversion of the building. This should satisfy the planning authority that the original use of the building is no longer viable and demonstrate effectively that the building is redundant and no longer fit for purpose;
 - Survey drawings – highlighting details of the existing building including windows, openings and other features;
 - A structural survey and condition report produced by an independent structural engineer which verifies that the building is capable of conversion. This should indicate the integrity of the building and provide comprehensive evidence to demonstrate the soundness of any parts of the building to be affected;
 - An assessment of any biodiversity or habitat value. Appropriate action must be taken into account for any particular interests found, for example bats and squirrels. It should be noted that in most circumstances a bat survey is required and should be submitted at the date of submission of a planning application, see the Natural Heritage supplementary planning guidance for further information; and
 - Details on adequate foul and surface water disposal including drainage tests.

8.0 Further guidance

- 8.1 It is recommended that the following sources of planning advice are read in conjunction with this guidance.
- Scottish Government
www.scotland.gov.uk
The consolidated Scottish Planning Policy, 2010
Planning Advice Note 72
Housing in the Countryside
The Conversion of Redundant Farm Steadings to Other Uses, 2006
 - Scottish Natural Heritage
www.snh.gov.uk
 - Bats in buildings
www.snh.gov.uk
 - The Barn Owl Trust
www.barnowltrust.org.uk
 - Cairngorms National Park Supplementary Planning Guidance
 - Sustainable Design Guide
 - Natural Heritage**www.cairngorms.co.uk**



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