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**CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK  
DEPOSIT LOCAL PLAN**

**LOCAL PLAN INQUIRY 2009**

**EXPANDED WRITTEN SUBMISSION**

April 2009

On behalf of Reidhaven Estate  
**OBJECTION REF: 456R**  
**SETTLEMENTS – NETHY BRIDGE**



**HALLIDAY | FRASER | MUNRO**  
PLANNING

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## **1 INTRODUCTION**

This written statement has been prepared by Halliday Fraser Munro Planning on behalf of Reidhaven Estate. It should be read in conjunction with previous representations made to the CNPA Deposit Draft Plan and subsequent Modifications.

## **2 OBJECTIONS – SETTLEMENTS (NETHY BRIDGE)**

### **2.1 REPRESENTATIONS – DEPOSIT LOCAL PLAN**

Halliday Fraser Munro made the following representations on behalf of Reidhaven Estate. The core argument of the original objection was as follows:

There are additional development opportunities for growth within the settlement of Nethy Bridge. There are sites allocated within the adopted Local Plan, which should be allocated in this local plan. The site at Duackbridge should be allocated for housing as a logical extension to the village. The former nursery site to the south east of the settlement should be allocated for low-density housing.

The changes sought were:

- Inclusion of the site at Duackbridge as a logical extension to the village.
- Inclusion of the former nursery site for low-density housing.

### **2.2 REPRESENTATIONS - 1ST MODIFICATIONS**

The representations made to the Deposit Local Plan were maintained.

### **2.3 REPRESENTATIONS – 2<sup>ND</sup> MODIFICATIONS**

The representations made to the Deposit Local Plan were maintained.

### **3 WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS EXPANDED APRIL 2009**

#### **SUMMARY**

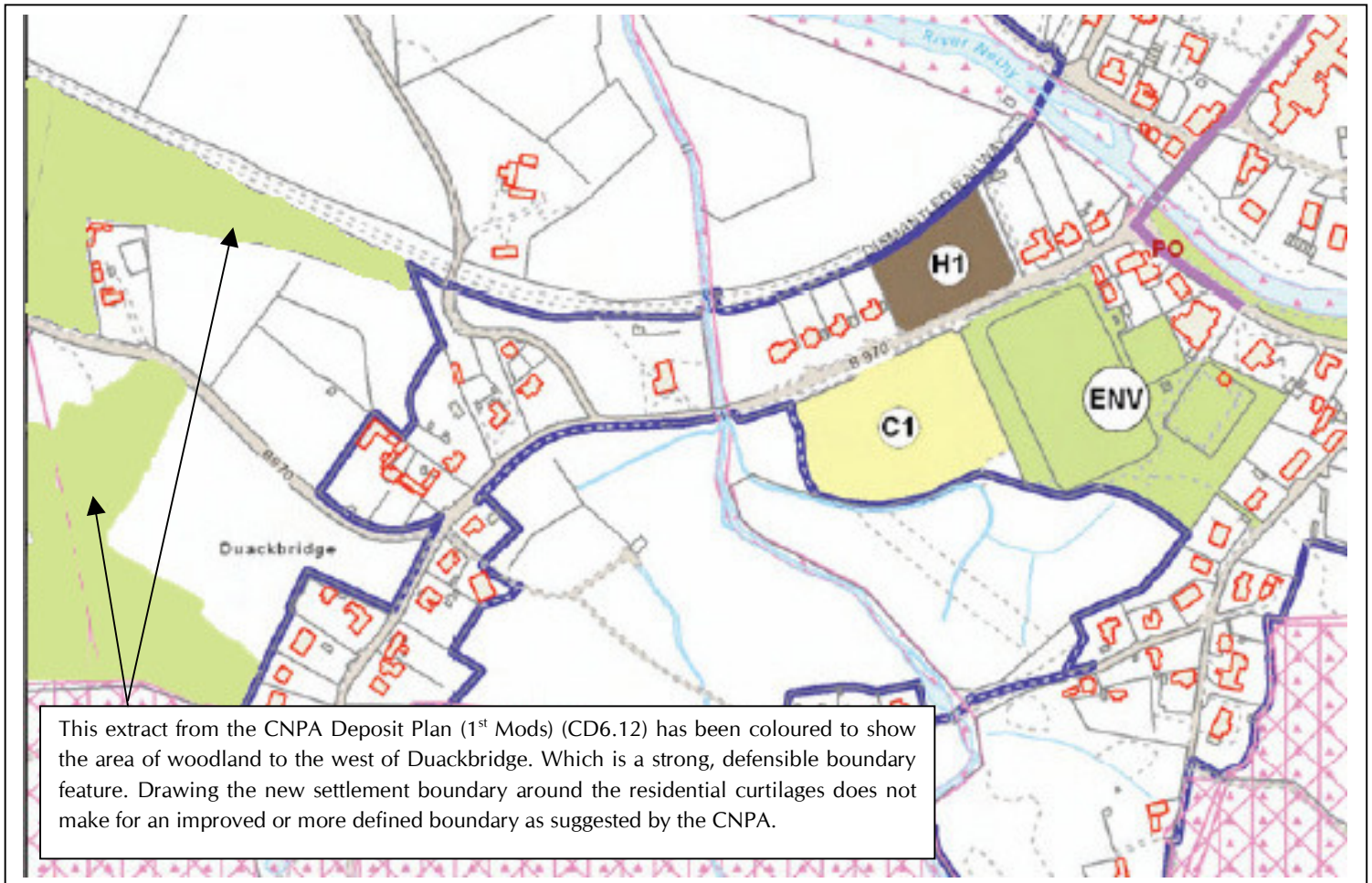
The Adopted Highland Council Badenoch and Strathspey Local Plan 1997 (CD6.6) shows housing allocations for the site in Duackbridge and former nursery site. The Deposit Cairngorms Local Plan including 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Modifications (CD6.11, 6.12 & 6.13) do not include these sites as future housing allocations.

### **4 THE DUACKBRIDGE SITE**

The Duackbridge site is located to the west of Nethy Bridge fronting onto the B970. This existing allocation is currently the subject of a planning application, which has been called in by the CNPA (CNPA Ref: 09/030/CP). The existing allocation is set back from the road against a backdrop of trees and forms an area of ground that has the character of an infill development site. There are residential properties to the east and west of the site and there is a strong defensible boundary to the west, which forms a natural boundary to the settlement.

Paragraph 6.16 of the CNPA Hearing Statement suggests that housing on the Duackbridge site would inappropriately extend the settlement building line outward and would further confuse the settlement pattern by appearing to connect the settlement with the individual houses along the B970. We would disagree that the building line would further confuse the settlement pattern. By building out the Duackbridge site the settlement boundary would be better defined by the woodland boundary to the west of the site. At present the settlement envelope appears to extend to this wooded area. To emphasise this point the Reporter's attention is drawn to RE Document 1.1. The picture shows street lighting extending out of Nethy Bridge past the front of the Duackbridge site along the B970. The presence of public lighting gives the impression that this site is part of the existing village envelope with the boundary being the wooded area to the west. The 30mph zone when approaching Nethy Bridge from the west extends part way along the site frontage and could easily be extended to include all of the site frontage if necessary (RE 1.2). The proposed settlement boundary is extremely tightly drawn along the domestic curtilages of existing properties. This leaves the paddock like area of ground that is an obvious location for development outwith the proposed settlement boundary. It

is also worth noting that this site is also closer to the post office and shop than the H2 Allocation.

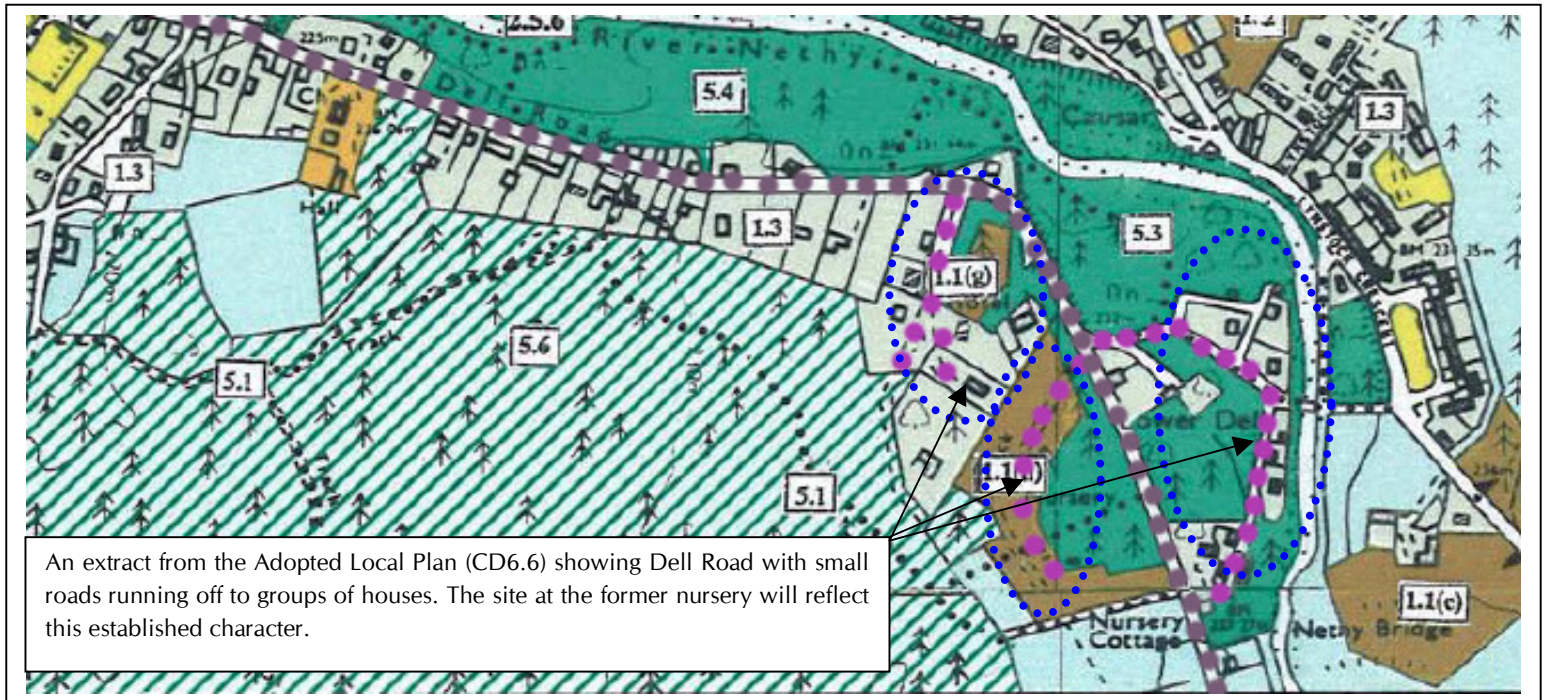


The existing allocation at Duackbridge was set well back from the road as a linear strip of developable land. This was done to avoid 'skylining'. Investigations including a Tree Survey (RE 2.2) and Ecological Investigation (RE 2.1) have been undertaken on behalf of Reidhaven Estate and juniper scrub has been identified within the existing housing allocation as shown on the plan accompanying the Ecology Report (RE 2.1). The planning application (CNPA Ref: 09/030/CP) shows development outwith this allocation, closer to the B970 Boat of Garten Road. We are confident that any properties built on this site will sit against woodland backdrop and will not break the skyline. Reidhaven Estate Document RE 1.3 shows how existing properties in the area sit against a backdrop of trees. These existing properties do not break the skyline and there is no reason why new properties on the Duackbridge site would do this either.

The Ecological Survey carried out on behalf of Reidhaven Estate (RE 2.1 page 6) identifies the Duackbridge site as semi-improved acid grassland bordered by juniper scrub. This grassland habitat is largely of low conservation value. There was one plant of interest identified as of medium ecological value. This was four clumps of Field Gentian. Along the periphery of the site is juniper scrub that is of medium conservation value. The Planning application submitted therefore avoids the areas of juniper scrub and proposes housing lower down the site closer to the B970. This arrangement makes considerably more sense than an allocation tight against the woodland to the south of the site and develops only the grassland habitat, which is of low conservation value. The proposed housing avoids the juniper habitat and is more logically positioned on the grassland habitat leaving a buffer between the developable area and the Abernethy NNR. The area opposite the planning application site was not included as part of this survey area but again enjoys a strong woodland backdrop with well-defined boundaries. The area to the north of the road is just as logical location for development as the land to the south of the B970 and will help to create a well-defined settlement boundary to Nethy Bridge in the West. This unconstrained site should be included within the new settlement boundary and allocated for residential development.

## **5 THE FORMER NURSERY SITE**

The former nursery site is also allocated within the Adopted Highland Council Badenoch and Strathspey Local Plan 1997 (CD 6.6) and is currently the subject of a planning application (CNPA Ref: 09/024/CP). The site is located off Dell Road, which is flanked on both sides by residential development. At this southern end of Dell Road the pattern of development is mixed. Where properties to the west are set back and front onto the road, properties around the nursery site are set in groups off small lanes. This is demonstrated on the map below, which is an extract from the Adopted Local Plan (CD 6.6).



The former nursery site has not been used for a number of years and includes redundant timber buildings that are in a poor state of repair (RE 1.4). The site is not visible when passing along Dell Road, as it is only the gated entrance to the north east of the site, which provides a view in. The woodland block to the east of the site is an existing buffer between Dell Road and the site, with a further woodland buffer to the west between the site and Abernethy Forest NNR. A tree survey has been carried out for this site. Initial impressions of the site are deceptive. Due to its former use as a tree nursery one may expect there to be high quality tree specimens and high conservation value, however, this is not the case. The Cairngorms Landscape Capacity for Housing Study (CD7.19) identifies the site as woodland, however, it needs to be pointed out that the development area as allocated is not wooded. The former nursery along with other areas are noted as being a rich recreation resource. We would disagree and suggest that the area proposed for development provides nothing more than a route through to the woodland walks beyond. There is a footpath through this site, which is used by dog walkers, and development would allow the retention of access through the site linking to woodland paths beyond. The Ecology Survey (RE 2.3) confirms that there are no individual native trees of conservation interest. There are three giant redwoods on the site the most

obvious one being the Wellingtonia located at the centre. The other two at the southern entrance are less obvious and have no impact on the developability of the location. The Tree Survey (RE 2.4) shows where a buffer zone can be used to protect existing trees.

The habitats within the site proposed for housing are considered of low ecological value. There are areas to the east and west of the allocated area within the former nursery boundary that are of medium ecological value. These areas could be retained and managed as part of any development to improve the ecological and conservation value of the location that would not otherwise occur.

*The CNPA states that given the variety of opportunities which exist for the provision of housing within the proposed settlement boundary, the case for the allocation of additional land as requested in objections 047, 459a and 456r are not considered to be compatible with the delivery of housing in Nethy Bridge on a scale which would support the sustainable growth of the community.*

We have made the point on behalf of Reidhaven Estate to the general housing strategy (Objection Ref: 456c) that the housing allocations for the intermediate settlements are extremely low and create an imbalance where housing is directed to larger settlements and a new settlement (An Camas Mor) at the expense of intermediate settlements such as Nethy Bridge. There is actually an obvious lack of variety and opportunity within the proposed settlement boundary. The allocations (H1 & H2) proposed for Nethy Bridge are sites, which were allocated in the Adopted 1997 Local Plan (CD 6.6), already have planning permission and are part of the consented supply not yet built. The 50 units will be built out during the 0-5 year period leaving no additional sites identified for the 5 -10 year period or the longer term. This will have a detrimental impact on settlements such as Nethy Bridge where there will be no development other than windfall sites on white land for which few opportunities exist. With no local investment in the intermediate settlements which provide basic services to the surrounding community villages such as Nethy Bridge will inevitably suffer. We have proposed that the Duackbridge location offers the potential for a larger allocation which better reflects the significance of this intermediate settlement that provides services to the immediate and surrounding community.



It is also worth pointing out that of the fifty units proposed the majority of these will come from the H2 allocation. The H2 allocation is heavily wooded and benefits only from outline planning permission. Whilst there may be an indicative number of units approved at outline stage the constraints that inevitable accompany a site like this make it more than likely that the numbers will be less than expected. The Highland Council approved the outline planning application (Highland Ref: 02/00045/OUTBS. The CNPA have called in the reserved matters application and from past experience it is very possible that 40 units will not be built out on this site due to constraints.

## **6 CONCLUSIONS**

We believe that the Duackbridge and former nursery sites in Nethy Bridge are appropriate and logical locations for future development within the village. Both sites are allocated in the current Badenoch and Strathspey Local Plan and no justification has been given for their re-designation as ENV allocations. The modest scale of these sites and their alternative nature and setting to the proposed allocations will offer a greater choice of location for housing within the settlement. At present there are two housing allocations which already have planning permission and will be short-term developments. In the medium to longer term there are no further allocations for housing within Nethy Bridge. One of the allocated sites enjoys outline planning permission but is constrained by its sensitive woodland setting. At the time of writing the reserved matters application has not been approved. We therefore respectfully suggest that these two unconstrained sites are included as housing sites within the CNPA Local Plan.

## **7 ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS**

RE 1.1 – Photograph looking west along B970.

RE 1.2 – Photograph looking east along B970.

RE 1.3 – Photograph showing existing properties with a woodland backdrop at Duackbridge.

RE 1.4 – Photograph showing abandoned buildings at the former nursery site.

RE 2.1 – Ecology Survey Duackbridge.

RE 2.2 – Tree Survey Duackbridge.

RE 2.3 – Ecology Survey Former Nursery Site.

RE 2.4 – Tree Survey Former Nursery Site.