

AGENDA ITEM 5

APPENDIX 2

2021/0305/DET

HABITATS REGULATIONS APPRAISAL

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Planning reference and proposal information	2021/0305/DET, Demolition of derelict hotel, together with the erection of 10 affordable flats, and associated parking at the former Struan House Hotel, Carrbridge, PH23 3AS
Appraised by	Nina Caudrey, Planning Officer
Date	13 October 2021
Checked by	NatureScot
Date	5 April 2022

INFORMATION

European site details

Name of European site(s) potentially affected

1. **Anagach Woods SPA**
2. **Craigmore Wood SPA**
3. **Kinveachy Forest SPA**
4. **Abernethy Forest SPA**
5. **Cairngorms SPA**

Collectively referred to as the Badenoch and Strathspey capercaillie SPAs

Qualifying interest(s)

1. **Anagach Woods SPA**

capercaillie (breeding)

2. **Craigmore Wood SPA**

capercaillie (breeding)

3. **Kinveachy Forest SPA**

Breeding: capercaillie

Scottish crossbill

4. **Abernethy Forest SPA**

Breeding: capercaillie

osprey

Scottish crossbill

5. **Cairngorms SPA**

Breeding: capercaillie

dotterel

golden eagle

merlin

osprey

peregrine

Scottish crossbill

Conservation objectives for qualifying interests

For all the SPAs, the conservation objectives are the same:

To avoid deterioration of the habitats of the qualifying species or significant disturbance to the qualifying species, thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained; and

To ensure for the qualifying species that the following are maintained in the long term:

- Population of the species as a viable component of the site
- Distribution of the species within site
- Distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species
- Structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species
- No significant disturbance of the species

APPRAISAL

STAGE 1:

What is the plan or project?

Relevant summary details of proposal (including location, timing, methods, etc)

Demolition of the derelict former Struan hotel in Carrbridge, followed by the construction and occupation of 10 affordable flats (8 x two person flats and two x 3 person flats), and associated parking, outside garden space and infrastructure. The hotel closed in 2005 and has been vacant since then, falling into a state of disrepair. The hotel is located opposite the Landmark visitor attraction in Carrbridge, on the main road through the village. Mains water and sewage connections will be made.

STAGE 2:

Is the plan or project directly connected with or necessary for the management of the European site for nature conservation?

No.

STAGE 3:

Is the plan or project (either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects) likely to have a significant effect on the site(s)?

Yes potential for likely significant effects on capercaillie for all the listed SPAs: There is potential for occupants of the proposed development to recreate in woods important for capercaillie, in particular woods E, F and G on the capercaillie woods map in Annex I, affecting the metapopulation of the SPA birds. Therefore further consideration is required for capercaillie of all the Badenoch and Strathspey SPAs.

Dotterel, golden eagle, merlin, osprey, peregrine, Scottish crossbill: No likely significant effect as the habitats used by these species are not directly affected by the proposed development. Only Scottish crossbill are likely to rely on the woods where occupants of the proposed development may recreate, however they are a tree canopy nesting species so would not be disturbed by people on the ground. Therefore only capercaillie are considered further in this appraisal.

STAGE 4:

Undertake an Appropriate Assessment of the implications for the site(s) in view of the(ir) conservation objectives

Distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species and Structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species

There will be no direct or indirect effects on the habitats, their structure or function or supporting processes, due to the location of the proposed development on a brownfield site within a

settlement, remote from the SPAs. Therefore these conservation objectives should be met.

No significant disturbance of the species

The assessment in **Annex I** results in a conclusion that there will not be any significant disturbance of the species, therefore this conservation objective will be met.

Distribution of the species within site

As there should not be significant disturbance of the species, the distribution should be unaffected and so this conservation objective will be met.

Population of the species as a viable component of the site

As all the other conservation objectives will be met, this conservation objective will not be affected by the proposed development.

Therefore, the proposed development will not affect any of the conservation objectives for any of the SPAs.

STAGE 5:

Can it be ascertained that there will not be an adverse effect on site integrity?

As all the conservation objectives will be met, **there will not be an adverse effect on site integrity for any of the SPAs.**

Annex I – capercaillie questions

2021/0305/DET, Demolition of derelict hotel, together with the erection of 10 affordable flats, and associated parking at the former Struan House Hotel, Carrbridge, PH23 3AS

Q1. Is the proposed development likely to change levels of human activity or patterns of recreation around the proposed development/associated settlement?

Q1: This and Q2 are included as screening questions to filter out any developments that aren't likely to have changed levels or patterns of recreation.

No. There is an existing high level of recreational (including walking, running, cycling and dog walking) use by both residents and visitors to the village on existing paths and tracks in the woods immediately around Carrbridge, which are connected to the **Slochd, North Carrbridge and Drochan & Drummulie capercaillie woods (woods E, F and G)** on the capercaillie woods map at the end of this document, taken from the HRA of the 2021 LDP). There is no reason to believe that the addition of the small number of people from the proposed development in this well used location would change the existing levels or patterns of recreation in these woods, or other capercaillie woods in Badenoch and Strathspey.

Assuming full occupancy of each flat, the proposed development would amount to an additional 22 people to an estimated (existing plus consented development) population of 983*. This equates to around a 2.2% increase in the population of Carrbridge. However it is unlikely that all of occupants will use the routes in the vicinity of Carrbridge, and fewer of them are likely to venture further afield into the capercaillie woods. There is also no reason to believe that occupants will undertake different types or patterns of recreation compared to existing use by residents and visitors.

* Population calculations:

Estimated population in 2020: **882 people** (data from <https://statistics.gov.scot/resource?uri=http%3A%2F%2Fstatistics.gov.scot%2Fdata%2Fpopulation-estimates-2011-datazone-linked-dataset> for datazone S01010541)

Additional population from consented** but not yet built/occupied developments: **101 people**

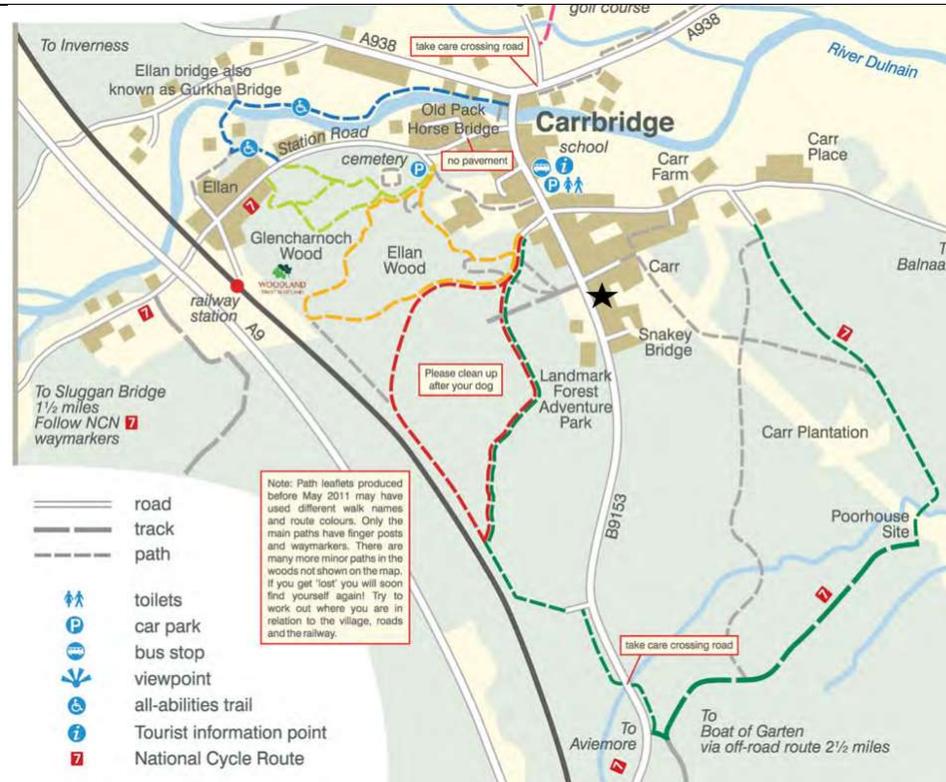
Combined estimated and consented population: **983 people**

Full occupancy of proposed 10 flats: **22 people**

Increase in combined population from addition of proposed development: 2.2%

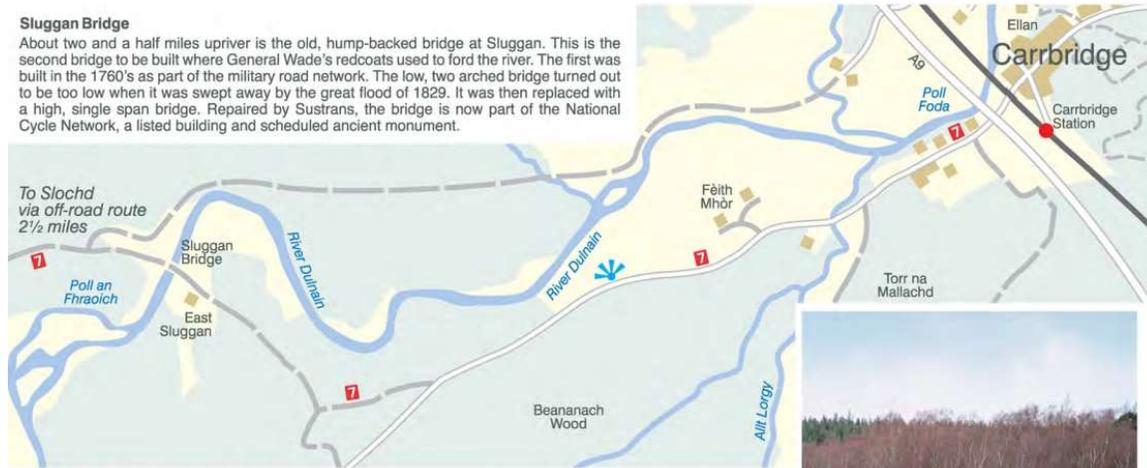
** The additional population from consented but not yet built/occupied developments was calculated using a multiplication factor of 2.07 per dwelling, as used for the 2021 LDP, in the absence of an alternative. The consented developments are:

	<p>19/05077/PIP, Erection of house, Rhubaan, Inverness Road, Carrbridge, PH23 3AU</p> <p>19/03799/FUL, Erection of house, Squirrel Cottage, Carrbridge, PH23 3AA</p> <p>2019/0120/DET, Construction of 47 houses/flats, associated roads and footways, land 80m south east of 2 Carr Place, Carrbridge</p>
<p>Q2. Are capercaillie woods significantly more accessible from this development site than from other parts of the associated settlement?</p> <p><i>Q2: This is included to ensure the effect of otherwise small-scale development sites particularly close to capercaillie woods are adequately considered. Evidence from settlements in Strathspey where houses are adjacent to woodlands indicates that networks of informal paths and trails have developed within the woods linking back gardens with formal path networks and other popular local destinations (eg primary schools). Such paths are likely to be used by visitors.</i></p>	<p>No - capercaillie woods are not significantly more accessible from the proposed development site compared to existing and consented built development in the village.</p> <p>See the below map - the approximate location of the proposed development site is marked by the black star on the top map. It is within the settlement and in proximity to promoted routes (and informal paths not marked on the maps), similar to the majority of the surrounding built development between Carr Road to the north and the B9153 to the west.</p> <p>The maps below show that there are a variety of promoted paths (including an off-road section of National Cycle Network route 7) providing access to the woods immediately around Carrbridge. The maps do not show other informal paths found within the woods. These woods are already heavily used at all times of the day by walkers, runners and cyclists, including those with dogs. Some of the routes continue into or have connections leading into woods used by capercaillie (woods E, F and G, on the capercaillie woods map at the end of this document). A smaller number of walkers, runners and cyclists also regularly use the connected paths within capercaillie woods E, F and G. Due to the location of the proposed development within the settlement and in relation to existing paths and routes, it has the same level of accessibility to capercaillie woods as much of the rest of the settlement.</p> <p>Extracts of maps below taken from https://cairngorms.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Carrbridge-Path-Leaflet-4.pdf</p>



Sluggan Bridge

About two and a half miles upriver is the old, hump-backed bridge at Sluggan. This is the second bridge to be built where General Wade's redcoats used to ford the river. The first was built in the 1760's as part of the military road network. The low, two arched bridge turned out to be too low when it was swept away by the great flood of 1829. It was then replaced with a high, single span bridge. Repaired by Sustrans, the bridge is now part of the National Cycle Network, a listed building and scheduled ancient monument.



<p>If Q1 & Q2 = No, conclusion is no significant disturbance to capercaillie and assessment ends here</p>	
<p>If Q1 or Q2 = Yes, continue to Q3</p>	
<p>Q3. Which capercaillie woods are likely to be used regularly for recreation by users of the development site at detectable levels? (list all)</p> <p><i>Q3: This is included to identify which capercaillie woods are likely to be used for recreation by users of non-housing development sites at levels that would be detectable. The answer will be assessed using professional judgement based on knowledge of existing patterns of recreation around settlements and in the local area, the relative appeal of the capercaillie woods concerned compared to other recreational opportunities in the area, the volume of recreational visits likely to be generated by the development site, and informed by national survey data (eg on the distances people travel for recreational visits).</i></p>	<p>N/a as conclusion for questions 1 and 2 is that there is no significant disturbance and so no need for further assessment.</p>
<p>Continue to Q4</p>	
<p>Q4. Are residents / users of this development site predicted to undertake any off path recreational activities in any of the woods identified at Q3 at detectable levels?</p> <p><i>Q4: This is included because any off path recreational use in capercaillie woods will result in significant disturbance and require mitigation.</i></p>	<p>N/a as conclusion for questions 1 and 2 is that there is no significant disturbance and so no need for further assessment.</p>
<p>If Q4 = No for any woods, continue to Q5</p> <p>If Q4 = Yes for any woods, mitigation is needed. Note and continue to Q5.</p>	
<p>Q5: Are each of the woods identified at Q3</p>	<p>N/a as conclusion for questions 1 and 2 is that there is no significant disturbance and so no need</p>

already established locations for recreation?

Q5: This is included because if users of the development site are likely to access previously infrequently-visited capercaillie woods, or parts of these woods, for recreation, significant disturbance is likely and mitigation is needed. This will be answered on the basis of professional knowledge.

for further assessment.

If Q5 = No for any woods, mitigation is needed. Note and continue to Q6.
If Q5 = Yes for any woods, continue to Q6

Q6: For each of the woods identified at Q3, are users of the development site predicted to have different temporal patterns of recreational use to any existing visitors, or to undertake a different profile of activities? (eg. more dog walking, or early morning use)

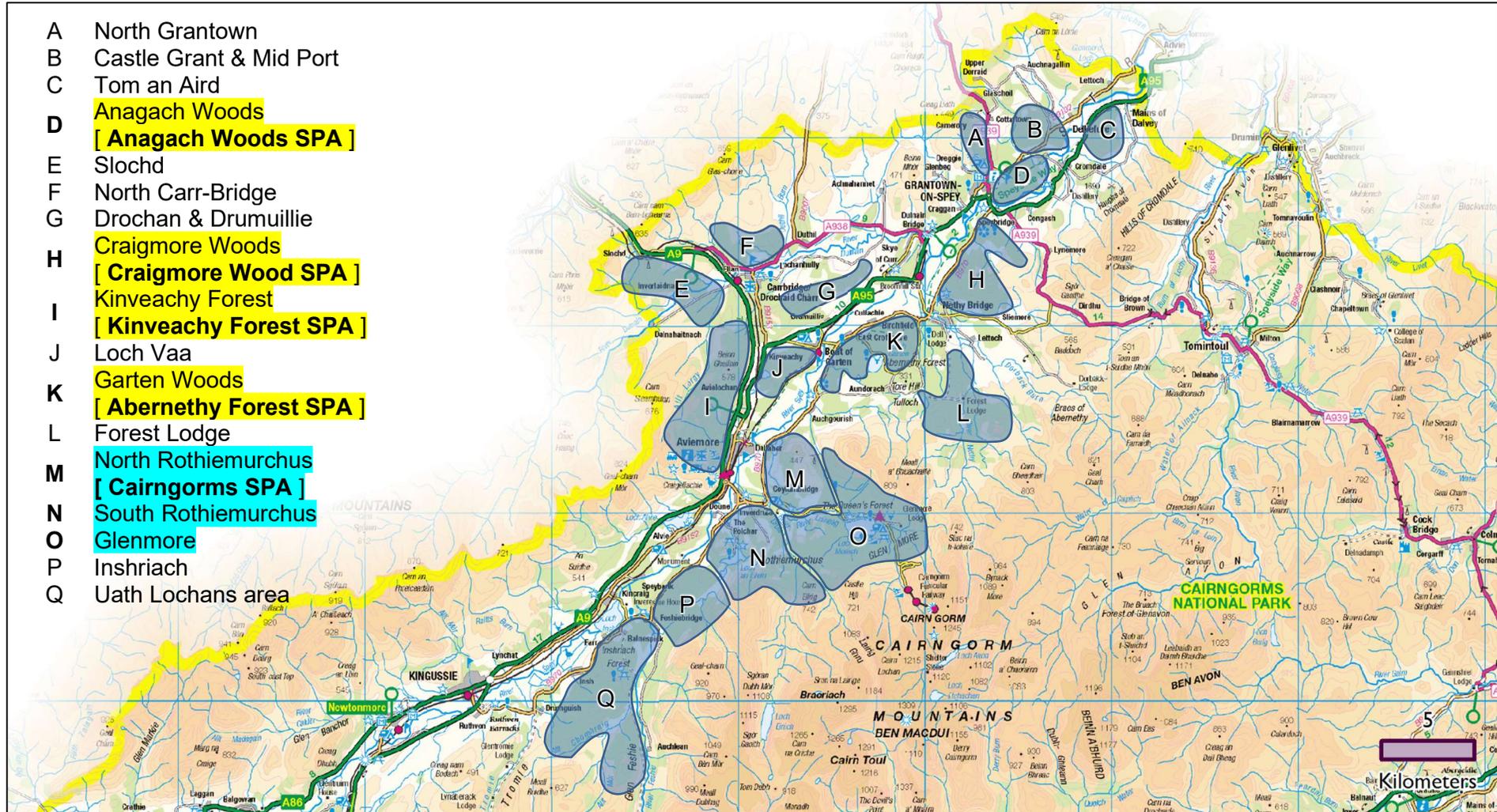
Q6: This is included because some types of recreation are particularly disturbing to capercaillie; and increased levels of these types of recreation will cause significant disturbance and require mitigation. This will be answered on the basis of professional knowledge on existing patterns of recreational use and whether each location is sufficiently close and/or convenient in relation to the development site and patterns of travel from there, to be used by users of the development for different recreational activities or at different times of day. For example, capercaillie woods with safe routes for dogs that are located close to development sites are likely to be used for early morning &/or after work dog walking.

N/a as conclusion for questions 1 and 2 is that there is no significant disturbance and so no need for further assessment.

If Q6 = yes for any woods, mitigation is needed. Note and continue to Q7
If Q6 = No for any woods, continue to Q7

<p>Q7: For each of the woods identified at Q3, could the predicted level of use by residents / users of the development site significantly increase overall levels of recreational use?</p> <p><i>Q7: This is included because a significant increase in recreational use could result in significant disturbance to capercaillie, even in situations where the capercaillie wood is already popular for recreation, and no changes to current recreational patterns / activities or off path activities are predicted. The answer was assessed on the basis of professional judgement of current levels of use and whether the increase is likely to be more than approximately 10%.</i></p>	<p>N/a as conclusion for questions 1 and 2 is that there is no significant disturbance and so no need for further assessment.</p>
<p>If Q4-7 = No for all woods, conclusion is no significant disturbance to capercaillie and assessment ends here</p> <p>If Q4, 5, 6 and/or 7 = Yes for any woods, mitigation is needed</p>	
<p>Conclusion: Is mitigation needed as a consequence of this development site in relation to each wood listed at Q3?</p>	<p>As conclusion for questions 1 and 2 is that there is no significant disturbance, there is no need for mitigation.</p>
<p>Reasons mitigation needed:</p>	<p>N/a as no mitigation required.</p>

Badenoch and Strathspey capercaillie woodlands



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