

Our Ref: ENQ/2021/1310
Your Ref:

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15 September 2021

Dear Sir

**Pre-App Advice Request - Local for Erection of 1 or 2 Dwellinghouses at
Cottown Steading, Strathdon, Aberdeenshire, AB36 8XA**

I write with reference to your request for pre-application advice for the above development dated 27 July 2021.

Please find attached the pre-application advice report.

If you have any further questions, please contact the above named officer.

Yours faithfully



Head of Planning and Environment Service

PRE-APPLICATION REPORT

Planning Reference: ENQ/2021/1310

Introduction

This letter relates to the above enquiry which was submitted to the Planning Service for review in July 2021. You have expressed an interest in erecting one or two dwellinghouses at Cottown Steading, Strathdon. The enquiry site is located in the countryside to the east of the Strathdon settlement. The enquiry site extends some 0.24ha and as existing at the site is a former H shaped steading building with slate roof. The site is accessed via the unclassified u91m road with the River Don lying to the north of the site. To the west of the site is a residential dwelling 'Cottown' and to the east is several further dwellings with the closest being 'Cottown Cottage' located approximately 65m from the site boundary. The enquiry site features a number of mature trees adjacent to the northern boundary of the site.

The enquiry form notes that you would seek permission to erect either a single dwelling or two detached dwellinghouses. From the information provided it is noted that the single dwelling would be a 1¾ storey cross gable dwelling with a pitched roof double garage. The dwelling would be finished in slate to the roof, timber horizontal cladding and would feature render bands around the windows. In terms of the two dwelling proposal, these would also be 1¾ storey dwellings finished in the same material palette as the single dwelling. The plans indicate that these would be served by a shared access with both dwellings having two car parking spaces. The enquiry form notes that either option would be served by a public water supply with a private drainage arrangement.

Relevant Policies & Guidance

Unfortunately, this response has been prepared without the benefit of a site visit, but it was felt sufficient information was available to provide a response. Any planning application will primarily be assessed against the Cairngorms National Park Authority Local Development Plan 2021. Its supplementary guidance, settlement statements, associated maps, appendices and any relevant planning advice is available online via this [link](#).

Although not an exhaustive list, based on the information submitted, the key planning policies relevant to the proposal you have outlined are considered to be:

Policy 1: New Housing Development
Part 3 Other housing in the countryside

Policy 3: Design and Placemaking
Part 1 Placemaking
Part 3 Sustainable Design

Policy 4 Natural Heritage
Part 4 Protected species

Policy 10: Resources
Part 1 Water resources
Part 2 Flooding
Part 3 Connection to sewerage
Part 8 Contaminated land
Policy 11: Developer obligations

In some cases, other material considerations can be taken into account in reaching a recommendation, further information on this is outlined below.

Assessment

Principle of Development

The key policy consideration in assessing the principle of development for this proposal would be Policy 1: New Housing Development Part 3 Other housing in the countryside. This supports development which is brownfield in nature and the Planning Service is satisfied that this site meets the definition of brownfield land as set out in the plan. In this instance as the proposal would involve the demolition of a steading building a structural survey would be required to justify the demolition. The structural survey provided with this enquiry concludes that a large portion of the existing steading is not suitable for conversion and would need to be demolished. The Planning Service is satisfied with the findings of the survey and as such, any proposal to demolish the steading and erect a new dwellinghouse would comply with Policy 1 Part 3 and be acceptable in principle. For the avoidance of doubt, the Planning Service consider that a single dwelling or two dwelling proposal as noted in this enquiry would comply with Policy 1 Part 3

Layout, Siting and Design

In terms of design, any application would be assessed against Policy 3: Design and Placemaking Part 3 Sustainable Design. For ease the two options provided in this enquiry have been addressed separately below.

One Dwelling Option

The single dwelling option proposes a 1¾ storey cross gable dwelling with semi detached double garage. The Planning Service consider that there are opportunities to enhance the overall design of the dwelling to ensure it is in keeping with the surrounding area. The pitch of the roof should be revised to bring it more in line with the 45 degree roof pitch which is common within this rural setting. The use of pitched dormer windows is considered appropriate to this setting and reflects the design of the neighbouring dwelling 'Cottown.'

The proposed material palette is considered to be of an acceptable quality with the use of natural slate to the roof welcomed. The proposed natural stone on the projecting gable and vestibule area is considered appropriate however it is unclear if this would utilise duntakings from the existing steading building. This would be encouraged and if possible, should be utilised on the principal elevation of the dwelling and could also be used as a traditional boundary treatment at the site.

Detail should be provided within any design statement on how the duntakings from the steading would be utilised. The design and access statement notes regarding the windows that high performance glazing will be used however no material is proposed. The Planning Service would encourage the use of timber or alu-clad windows. The appearance of the proposed timber cladding is somewhat unclear from the plans provided and this should be clarified within any subsequent application as well as confirming any treatment proposed to the cladding.

The retention of the mature trees adjacent to the northern boundary of the site is welcomed and further landscaping details should be provided to provide biodiversity enhancement at the site along with a programme for the implementation and management of any planting. Boundary treatments should be noted within any planning application and should be appropriate to the rural setting with the use of stone walls or post and wire fencing encouraged.

Two Dwelling Option

The layout of this proposal seeks to replicate the general layout of the existing steading building with the proposed dwellings sited on the east and west wings. While seeking to utilise the footprint of the steading is welcomed, the Planning Service would recommend relocating the dwelling located on the east wing closer to the eastern boundary. As an approximate guide the house should be moved 4m to the east. This would provide improved separation between the two proposed dwellings and provide an opportunity to move the dwelling located on the west wing further from the adjacent boundary and provide greater separation to the neighbouring dwelling 'Cottown.' Due to the scale of this development and the proximity of the proposed dwelling on the west wing, the neighbouring dwelling 'Cottown' may suffer a loss of sunlight as a result of the development. To demonstrate that sufficient levels of light would still be provided to the neighbouring site the Planning Service would seek a sunlight analysis and further details on this can be found in Appendix 1. The roof pitch of the dwellings should also be amended to a 45 degree pitch to be more in keeping with the rural setting of the site.

The proposed material palette is considered to be of an acceptable quality with the use of natural slate welcomed. The proposed natural stone is considered appropriate however as noted above it is unclear if this would utilise duntakings from the existing steading building. This would be encouraged and if possible, should be utilised elsewhere on the dwelling or alternatively could be used as a traditional boundary treatment at the site. The design and access statement notes regarding the windows that high performance glazing will be used however no material is proposed. The Planning Service would encourage the use of timber or alu-clad windows. The appearance of the proposed timber cladding is somewhat unclear from the plans provided and this should be clarified within any subsequent application as well as confirming any treatment proposed to the cladding.

As with the single dwelling option, the retention of the mature trees adjacent to the northern boundary of the site is welcomed however further landscaping details should be provided to provide biodiversity enhancement at the site along with a programme for the implementation and management of any planting. No private garden ground has been delineated on the plans and this would be required in any

subsequent application. Suitable boundary treatments should be proposed between the two dwellings such as post and wire fencing with hedging which would also contribute to biodiversity enhancement at the site. As this proposal provides two dwellings within the site, private garden ground is somewhat limited and as a result it is likely that permitted development rights would be removed for each site for any other structures within the respective sites.

In summary, the Planning Service consider that the proposed design of both options is broadly acceptable however the above noted recommendations should be considered prior to any planning application being submitted. Any application should also be supported by a design statement and details of this can be found in Appendix 1.

Technical Matters

The design statement notes that a connection would be made to the public water supply and therefore Scottish Water would be consulted as part of any application to confirm a suitable connection can be made. In terms of drainage, the design statement notes that a private drainage arrangement would be formed to serve either option. In support of any application drainage certification would need to be provided to demonstrate that any development can be suitably served by this means and further information on this can be found in Appendix 1. In the absence of these details and confirmation from Scottish Water regarding a connection to the public water supply, it cannot be confirmed if any application would comply with Policy 10 Part 1 and Part 3.

In respect of flooding consideration must be given to the River Don which lies to the north of the enquiry site. SEPA records indicate that the public road to the north of the site is within the indicative river flood extent from the adjacent River Don however this does not encroach into the enquiry site. The Council's Floor Risk and Coastal Protection Service was consulted and confirmed that were an application made at the site it would not have great concern with flood risk. The site does not have a history of flooding and the location of the proposed dwelling(s) is uphill from the Don which minimises any risk. As such the proposal is likely to comply with Policy 10 Part 2.

Policy 3 Part 3 requires development include an appropriate means of access, egress, levels of private amenity ground, and space for off-street parking. In terms of parking provision any application would have to satisfy the Aberdeenshire Council Car Parking Standards for Development Control requirements which can be viewed [here](#). The proposal for two dwellings at the site shows a parking provision of two spaces per dwelling and it would appear there are two spaces for the single dwelling option. Both options propose four bedroom dwellings and as such three parking spaces should be provided to comply with the car parking standards. Visibility splays should be shown on a plan as well as details of the proposed bin store at the site which must be located outwith the visibility splay.

Any planning application would need to be supported by a bat survey in compliance with Policy 4 Part 4. Further information can be found on this in Appendix 1.

The design and access statement notes that the dwellings would be served by air source heat pumps (ASHP) however no details are provided. Details of the proposed pump should be provided as part of any application including the location, model and technical specifications of the proposed ASHP. The Council's Environmental Health Service would be consulted to assess the impact of noise from any ASHP to neighbouring amenity. The Planning Service would recommend locating the ASHP a sufficient distance from the neighbouring dwelling 'Cottown.'

Due to past agricultural use, there is a possibility that the land may have been contaminated, as such it is likely the Council's Contaminated Land Service will request further information on the historic use of the site to demonstrate compliance with Policy 10 Part 8.

Developer obligations may be required in compliance with Policy 11. The Planning Service would recommend that early discussions are held between the Council and developers to make sure that investment in necessary new infrastructure is dealt with in a timely manner. This should be borne in mind should you wish to proceed with an application for planning permission and early engagement with the Council's Developer Obligations Service would be recommended. The Service can be contacted at developerobligations@aberdeenshire.gov.uk.

Further guidance on how to submit a planning application can be found via this [link](#). If you decide to proceed with an application, details of fees can be found [here](#) and you can apply using the ePlanning Scotland [Portal](#) or alternatively you can print off the forms and return these to us with the relevant fee, plans and supporting information. Please note that any need to place an advertisement in the press will require an additional fee that must be paid before any decision can be issued.

Conclusion

In summary, the Planning Service concludes that the principle of development outlined in this enquiry is likely to meet the requirements of the Cairngorms National Park Authority Local Development Plan 2021. The proposed design of either option should take cognisance of the points raised above. Furthermore, technical information is required in respect of bats, water supply, drainage, parking and access. In the absence of this information the Planning Service cannot confirm whether the proposal would be supported however should technical information be provided then the Service considers that the proposal is likely to be supported.

Please note that the above comments and advice are given strictly without prejudice to the eventual decision of Aberdeenshire Council / CNPA on any formal planning application. Whilst every effort has been made to provide you with accurate professional advice, the Council / CNPA is not bound by this advice in the event of submission of a formal application.

Only at that stage will the Council / CNPA be in receipt of all the necessary information, undertaken a site visit and received all technical consultations. Furthermore, neighbours and other members of the public have a right to make representations. Such representations and consultation responses will be taken into

account when a planning application is determined. Please be aware that the decision may be taken by a planning officer or by the relevant committee. Aberdeenshire Council aims to determine applications of this type within the statutory 8 week period from the date of validation however if the application is called-in by the CNPA this may affect the timescales for determination. Where this is not possible, for whatever reason, we will endeavour to keep you updated on the progress of your application.

If you require clarification on any points covered in this response, please do not hesitate to contact the officer named at the top of the letter. Please note that a substantially different proposal or site, or a significant delay in coming back to us, may require submission of a new enquiry. If there has been a change in planning policy or interpretation, our advice may also be different.

Appendix 1

Drainage Certification

Certification is required for all applications proposing drainage by means of a septic tank and soakaway. A detailed report to confirm that the soakaway location and design will be effective in all-weather conditions and will not contaminate water supplies is required. The report must be certified by a Chartered Civil or Structural Engineer, or similarly qualified person who is indemnified against professional risk. The certificate should be signed and dated, and a block plan submitted showing the location of all the proposed drainage. Further advice is available in Council Guidance leaflet: Providing drainage for new developments where public sewers are not available; [PAN 79 Water and Drainage](#); and [SEPA Standing Advice for Planning Authorities and Developers](#).

Surface Water Disposal - Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS)

Applications should incorporate Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS) as the preferred method of surface water disposal. Full details of all SUDS should be submitted to the Planning Authority, including a report and supporting calculations to confirm that the proposed drainage system will be effective in all weather conditions, and not exacerbate flooding from watercourses or existing piped drainage systems. The report must be certified by a Chartered Civil Engineer, or similarly qualified person who is indemnified against professional risk. Infiltration test certificates will be required where surface water soakaways are proposed.

For developments intended to be constructed in two or more phases, an outline SUDS design will be required for the whole site and detailed information for the proposed SUDS design for each phase. Further information is available from the local planning office or SEPA

[Planning Guidance on Sustainable Drainage Systems Regulation of SUDS](#)

Structural Engineer's Report Demolition of Traditional Steading

A structural survey is required to accompany applications involving the proposed demolition of the existing steading buildings (and the existing cottage) to demonstrate that the existing structures cannot be retained and converted. The structural survey should demonstrate that the structures to be replaced are structurally unsound.

An up-to-date written structural survey should be submitted by an appropriately qualified professional person (a chartered structural engineer). The report should attest to the stability of the building and its capability for retention for residential purposes. The report should describe the extent to which the existing walls are capable of being retained as existing and explain where significant rebuilding or underpinning would be required.

The written survey must be supported by annotated drawings of the existing structure (floor plans and sections showing ground levels and elevations) to show

the extent of any structural problems identified and those sections of walls proposed to be demolished and rebuilt. A labelled photographic survey should also be submitted with the application showing all external elevations.

Design Statement – CNPA

A design statement demonstrating compliance with Policy 3: Design and Placemaking, Part 3.1: Placemaking of the Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan 2021 is required. This policy outlines the six qualities of successful places against which the development should be assessed. The statement should provide full justification for the proposed design explaining design principles and concepts applied in accordance with this policy in order to properly assess the impact of the development in its surroundings. The statement may include a series of illustrations, photos, and text to show the assessment undertaken. The Policy is available to view on the Cairngorms National Park [website](#).

Further guidance on the need and preparation of the Statement can be found by viewing PAN 68 Design Statements on the Scottish Government [website](#).

Sunlight/Daylight Assessment

In order to be able to assess the impact of the proposed development on the neighbouring property(ies) we require an assessment on daylight and/or sunlight to be carried out, in accordance with the Building Research Establishment's (BRE) guidance on Daylight and Sunlight.

The calculation should demonstrate the availability of daylight and/or sunlight pre-development and post-development.

Following factors will require to be calculated for the Sunlight/Daylight Assessment:

- Sunlight availability to adjacent windows and open spaces;
- Overshadowing in neighbouring gardens and open spaces;
- Daylight to neighbouring windows.

Please submit a report on daylight and sunlight, and include diagrams where appropriate.

Further guidance can be found at [BRE Daylight and Sunlight](#).

Bats

It is considered that the development could have an impact on bats, which are European Protected Species and are protected by law. The applicant is required to carry out a bat survey to identify whether bats are using the building and, if so, to determine the full impact on bats of the proposed development, and detail any mitigation required.

Bat surveys should be carried out in accordance with Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) Guidelines on the requirements of bat surveys which, provides details of timing and

the scope of surveys to be undertaken. A link to the BCT Guidelines and additional information on Bats and Development can be found in the following [Planning Advice](#).

Please note that bat surveys cannot be provided as a condition to planning consent.

For further information please contact your local planning office.