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# CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

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**Title:** REPORT ON CALLED-IN PLANNING APPLICATION

**Prepared by:** ANDREW TAIT, PLANNING OFFICER  
(DEVELOPMENT CONTROL)

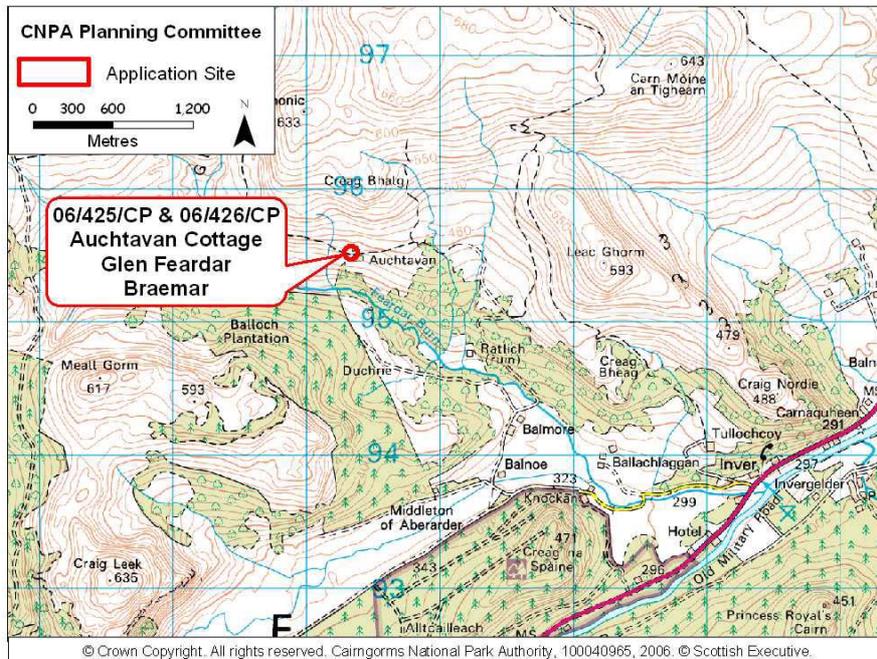
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**DEVELOPMENT PROPOSED:** CONSERVATION REPAIRS TO AUCHTAVAN COTTAGE AND MILL BUILDING, AUCHTAVAN, GLEN FEARDAR, BRAEMAR (FULL PP & LISTED BUILDING CONSENT)

**REFERENCE:** 06/425/CP & 06/426/CP

**APPLICANT:** BRAEMAR COMMUNITY LIMITED,  
C/O DAVID MILLAR, LORD AUSTIN-SMITH LLP, 202 BATH STREET,  
GLASGOW, G2 4HW

**DATE CALLED-IN:** 20<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2006



**Fig. 1 - Location Plan**

## SITE DESCRIPTION AND PROPOSAL

1. Auchtavan lies in a remote position approximately 3 kilometres north west of Inver on Upper Deeside. The track leading up to the site goes from Balmore to Auchtavan through an area of birch woodland and open moorland. The site includes an existing cottage and an agricultural threshing mill building, which at present are both unoccupied. There is also a cottage adjacent which is still used.
2. This report covers both full planning and listed building consent and relates to Auchtavan Cottage which is 'A' listed and the nearby 'Horse Mill' (former threshing mill and granary) which is 'B' listed. The buildings are part of what was once a much larger settlement group. Auchtavan Cottage is the oldest of the 3 buildings, possibly of late 18<sup>th</sup>/early 19<sup>th</sup> century origin. The building is a simple croft house with internal measurements of approximately 4 by 12.5 metres and was once perhaps split into two sections with a byre and living area. The adjacent Horse Mill has similar dimensions.



**Fig 2. Auchtavan Cottage and Horse Mill. Fig 3 Auchtavan Cottage**

3. The Planning Committee will recall approving an application last year for a shelter for the cottage made of metal sheeting. The shelter is now in place to protect the cottage. This application for conservation works is the next step in the process of conserving and thus safeguarding both historic structures.
4. Standard tasks to be undertaken throughout the duration of the project include Archaeological supervision and a watching brief remit for the conservation repair work to be undertaken. The work will adopt an archaeological approach to the surveying and scheduling of repairs to each element of the buildings to ensure as much original fabric is saved and re-used whenever possible. A full professional photographic

record will be taken of all areas of the existing buildings. Through careful examination of stone types, appropriate repair techniques will be identified. Wherever possible new build will be constructed in a like for like fashion either re-using the existing fabric or traditional lime mortar. Where there is an introduction of new materials, the area will be expressed overtly as new.

5. On the cottage roof areas of existing turf will be retained and where it is missing it will be replaced using the same methods, local hillsides are to be surveyed for grass type to ensure that turf is likely to match that still in existence on the cottage. The roof will then be reinstated with salvaged corrugated roof sheeting as currently exists to protect the turf roof. With the Horse Mill the roof appears to be sound and will be retained as is. Mortar joints will be carefully examined and re-pointed where necessary using traditional lime mortar. The loft door is to be reinstated in timber with the design based upon the examination of other similar local properties and will use locally sourced timber.
6. Access to both buildings is via a small track. For the duration of the repairs, temporary stone infill to track ruts will be utilised to assist the delivery of materials on site.
7. In historic terms the cottage is very important and was identified by park staff last year as being one of the few remaining examples in Scotland of its type, exhibiting a cruck framed structure with hanging lum. The building was subsequently 'A' listed by Historic Scotland which means that it is of national importance.
8. The application is being put forward by Braemar Community and Invercauld Estate is happy for the Community to act on their behalf as agents with this proposal.

## **DEVELOPMENT PLAN CONTEXT**

9. In the **Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire Structure Plan 2001-2016 (North East Scotland Together, NEST) Policy 20** states the built heritage of the North East will be conserved and promoted as a valuable non-renewable resource. Enhancement, active use, conservation and access to our built heritage should be encouraged wherever possible.
10. **Policy Env\18 of the Aberdeenshire Local Plan** considers that all buildings of special architectural or historic interest shall be protected against all works which would have a detrimental effect on their listed character, integrity, or setting. The council will encourage the protection maintenance, enhancement, active use and conservation of listed buildings. Alterations and extensions to listed buildings must be of the highest quality, respect the original structure in terms of setting, scale, design and materials.

## CONSULTATIONS

11. **Historic Scotland** has no objection to the proposal.
12. **Aberdeenshire Council Planning and Environmental Services** accept the development subject to a strict Archaeological watching brief, in order to minimise the disturbance of interior and the surrounding area. The criteria for the archaeological watching brief should meet the requirements as set out in PAN 42, para 35: 'The developer shall secure the implementation of an archaeological watching brief, to be carried out by an Archaeology Service on behalf of the planning authority, during development work. The retained archaeological organisation shall be afforded access at all times and allowed to record and recover items of interest and finds. Terms of Reference for the watching brief will be supplied by the Aberdeenshire Council Archaeology Service'. Advice in PAN 42 also states: 'The name of the archaeological organisation retained by the developer shall be given to the planning authority and to the Aberdeenshire Council Archaeology Service in writing not less than 14 days before development commences.'

## REPRESENTATIONS

13. No representations received.

## APPRAISAL

14. The appraisal in this case is relatively straightforward. The question is does the proposal conserve the historic character and integrity of the buildings as well as their setting.
15. In this case, the answer is yes as the proposal is put forward purely to conserve and enhance the buildings. The application adopts what is described as an archaeological approach where work will be based upon surveying to schedule a detailed approach to repairing any particular part of the buildings. Where repairs are carried out they will be carried out using materials that are evident on the intact parts of the structure. Where entirely new areas of repair are made this will be carried out using the same materials but will be overtly expressed to show the repairs as part of the historic evolution of the buildings.
16. The detailed works proposed are mentioned in the site description section of this report and are heavily based upon observation of the existing buildings. Where new repairs are required (mostly to the rafters at west end of cottage) timber will be locally sourced and any new turf will be sourced from local hillsides to ensure the best possible historic match with what is evident on the cottage. The Horse Mill requires much less intervention, the roof being in sound condition. A loft door

will be reinstated using locally sourced timbers and any repairs to pointing will use traditional lime mortar.

17. Historic Scotland has no objection to the scheme and has been working with the applicants from the inception of this project. Aberdeenshire Council Built and Cultural Heritage find the development acceptable subject to a strict archaeological watching brief which is included as a condition at the end of the report. I am of the view that the application accords fully with the requirements of planning policy.
18. Overall, this is clearly a very positive proposal that contributes strongly towards the aims of the park both in terms of conserving and enhancing cultural heritage but also on the basis of being a local community project. Consequently, the proposal is recommended for approval.
19. A condition relating to the track that accesses the site is included to ensure that any additional material placed on the track is proportionate to what is required.

## **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE AIMS OF THE NATIONAL PARK**

### **Conserve and Enhance the Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Area**

20. The restoration of the buildings would contribute to both the cultural heritage but also to the wider historic value of settlement in the landscape.

### **Promote Sustainable Use of Natural Resources**

21. The repairs will be reinstated in a like for like manner and where possible the materials from the site will be re-used in the conservation works. Where new materials are introduced, these will be expressed overtly as new elements. A majority of the new materials introduced will mainly be related to timber repairs to the cruck frame and missing roof members on the cottage. Local timber will be used.

### **Promote Understanding and Enjoyment of the Area**

22. In the longer term, the proposal will contribute to the understanding and enjoyment of the area. Restoration work may also help to provide training in traditional building methods.

## Promote Sustainable Economic and Social Development of the Area

23. The application is in effect a community proposal and the community are working together with historic bodies to rescue the building. As such the scheme is contributing towards the social development of the area and may also prove to be an important educational tool in the future for local schools and other organisations with an interest.

## RECOMMENDATION

24. That Members of the Committee support a recommendation to: **GRANT** Full Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent for conservation repairs to Auchtavan Cottage and Mill Building, Glen Feardar, Braemar subject to the following conditions:
1. The development to which this permission relates must be begun within five years from the date of this permission.
  2. The developer shall secure the implementation of an archaeological watching brief, to be carried out by an Archaeology Service on behalf of the CNPA acting as planning authority, during development work. The retained archaeological organisation shall be afforded access at all times and allowed to record and recover items of interest and finds. Terms of Reference for the watching brief will be supplied by the Aberdeenshire Council Archaeology Service'. Advice in PAN 42 also states: 'The name of the archaeological organisation retained by the developer shall be given to the CNPA acting as planning authority and to the Aberdeenshire Council Archaeology Service in writing not less than 14 days before development commences.
  3. Exact specifications for new windows and doors shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the CNPA acting as planning authority prior to any windows/doors being installed. The windows/doors installed shall be in accordance with the approved specifications.
  4. Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved full details of any material to be brought onto the site for track repairs shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the CNPA acting as planning authority. Repairs shall then be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

## **NOTE**

**Because of the 'A' listing of the cottage no decision notice can be issued until Historic Scotland has been notified that it is the CNPA's intention to grant permission for the repairs to the cottage. Historic Scotland then has a 28 day period in which they can choose to call-in the application should they wish.**

Andrew Tait

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4 January 2007

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