

AGENDA ITEM 6

APPENDIX 3

2016/0271/PPP

REPRESENTATIONS

08 August 2016

For the attention of:

**David Allan, Case Officer
Planning and Rural Development
Cairngorms National Park Authority
14 The Square
Grantown on Spey
Scotland
PH26 3HG**

Dear Mr Allan

**Reference: PLANNING APPLICATION CNPA ref: 2016/0271/PPP Council ref: 16/03087/PIP
Proposed erection of EIGHT houses and access road adjacent to existing dwellings including 1,
Ridewood Grove at Land 45M NW of 3 Ridewood Grove, Newtonmore**

Planning Objection and Comment

I write in connection with the above planning application.

I have examined the plans and documents submitted and, as an immediate neighbour to the land in question and someone who has lived and worked in Badenoch since 2003, I wish to object strongly to the development of these houses in this location. This is a speculative development proposal submitted for commercial reasons rather than in accordance with strategic growth of the village, as clearly outlined in the local plan. There is already a surplus of available sites for this type of residential building elsewhere in the village and this proposal brings no demonstrable benefit to the local community.

With reference to the Cairngorms National Park local development plan 2015:

There are a number of aspects of the proposed development that are not consistent with the CNP Local Development Plan, i.e. that do not appear to meet, take account of, or fully address the requirements of the plan, as highlighted below in bold/red/italic; my comments below each section.

39.3 There is a trend towards an ageing population and the drift of younger people from the area stems from limited employment opportunities and an inability to access local housing. Retention of the individual character and appeal of Newtonmore will depend *on appropriate housing development which should be small-scale, of sensitive design and enhance the existing character.*

(This development, relative to the size of the village, the location, access roads, and neighbouring existing settlements, is not in any way "small-scale". The proposed eight dwellings are excessive, numerically, relative to the size of the site. It is entirely unspecified that the housing will be of sensitive design and it is highly unlikely that the proposed development will enhance the existing character of the area, an attractive corner of the village of Newtonmore comprising rolling farmland with traditional livestock and ready access and views towards the Monadhliaths. Numerous recent housing developments within and around the perimeter of the Strone Road have already threatened to compromise the strong sense of natural heritage and landscape and this proposed development is

a step too far, an encroachment into good agricultural land. Furthermore, the proposed development will in no way address any difficulties that younger people might experience in accessing the housing market, if indeed such a problem will exist significantly or specifically within this particular village once the development at the southern end of the village is on stream.)

39.4 Newtonmore is a thriving community which provides a focus for local services and facilities. It is a main settlement in the settlement hierarchy and as such *development should meet the needs of the local and wider communities and visitors to the area. This should be undertaken in a way which complements the existing village, and enhances its role as a tourism centre for visitors to this part of the Park.*

(There is no evidence to support the premise that the development will meet the needs of the local and wider communities and visitors to the area at this time or in the foreseeable future. There is low demand for this kind of open market housing in the village. The village currently has sufficient large/upscale houses and with developments currently in progress there should already be adequate provision made for both 1-3 bedroom and affordable housing within the village. Newtonmore already has a significant supply of allocated housing land to meet local and CNP requirements. As consent has been granted for 81 houses (out of a possible allocation of 120) phased over 20 years on CNP zoned land located between Station Road and Perth Road it would strongly suggest that the village does not require additional multiple new-build housing for the foreseeable future.

The proposed development is therefore surplus to CNP and local requirements and a likely outcome is that not only will the additional housing stock suppress other housing market activity in the village but a proportion of any housing built will interest only inward migration by an elderly population or to distant owners wishing to buy to re-let as holiday accommodation....consequently draining the spirit of village community further.

As the CNP plan suggests, there is limited appeal to younger people for living in the village because of scant work opportunities and, with public transport links generally unsuitable, Newtonmore lies outside of practical commuting distance to Inverness and Perth for many. For most other potential buyers, there is sufficient availability of properties in Newtonmore and area, especially taking account of other significant housing developments in progress in neighbouring Kingussie and other villages. Demand is relatively low in Newtonmore; there are currently upwards of 15 properties actively on the market, some have been for a considerable length of time.

Consequently it would seem to me that, having established a local zone for future housing development in Newtonmore, the CNP cannot look favourably at this time on any significant development outside of the zone agreed and established within the park plan.)

Objectives

- **To consolidate Newtonmore's role as a main settlement in the settlement hierarchy.**
- ***To ensure that development contributes to a clear definition between settlement and countryside.***
- **To protect the role of Newtonmore in providing services to the wider region.**
- **To ensure Newtonmore's built heritage is preserved and enhanced.**
- ***To identify sufficient housing land to meet the requirements of the community.***
- ***To facilitate appropriate economic growth which supports a thriving community.***
- ***To protect those parts of the village that are important to its character and setting.***

(The area around Strone Road has seen a number of recent building projects that have already begun to change the character of the surrounding countryside, albeit that they have comprised individual properties; but there is arguably now sufficient pressure on access to and from the main street. The addition of a further eight houses, in an estate-type format, would further diminish the rural amenity in every respect and detract from the current use of the land to winter and accommodate livestock throughout the year.

Quite understandably, local residents whose properties lie adjacent to the proposed development will cherish the rural and tranquil location with an outlook across farmland, mature trees, and unrestricted views to the hills. The proposed development is excessive and its proximity – in particular the proposed location of the access road – will be detrimental to the status quo. It will result in a greatly or completely reduced outlook, an unacceptable loss of privacy, and an increase in noise and traffic pollution. The likelihood is that, if this application is successful, the value of property in this part of the village will materially decrease and the overall housing market will become even more sluggish.

General design guidance

39.5 All new development will, where appropriate:

- *consolidate the existing settlement;*
- *maximise use of existing local services and infrastructure;*
- *ensure the quality of surrounding landscape, and sensitive valuable habitats is not compromised;*
- *enhance and diversify the local economy;*
- *reflect existing housing development in terms of positions, density and scale;*
- *maintain building lines, plot sizes, building sizes and building orientation. This should be done in a way which raises architectural and design quality;*
- *protect existing shops and businesses and their normal operations;*
- *add to and improve community facilities, including improving pedestrian connectivity and achieving a more pedestrian and cycle friendly environment; and*
- *promote energy efficiency and sustainability.*

(It is currently entirely unclear if there will be a commitment to meet the CNP plan requirements as laid out above. In respect of our own property: because of our location close to the new-builds and laying well below the height of the proposed development it is likely that our privacy will be significantly compromised, especially if construction is above a single storey. Additionally, while it is understood that only certain species of mammal and bird are of particular scientific interest when reaching a decision on this application it is worth pointing out that there is a potential ongoing risk to a large number of species that are currently prolific across the proposed development, e.g. small mammals such as red squirrel, weasel, vole and hedgehog, bees, and birds such as raptors, partridge, pheasant, woodpecker, owl, swallow, goldfinch, linnet, and an established rookery)

Developer contributions and infrastructure requirements

39.13 In Newtonmore, developer contributions will be required towards infrastructure works which are reasonably related to the development of the site. This will include:

- *education provision*
- *library facilities*
- *healthcare provision*
- *recycling provision*

- *roads infrastructure related to the proposed new development*
- *travel improvements, community facilities*
- *open space*
- *strategic landscaping, connection to the path network*
- *natural heritage*
- *affordable housing provision*

(The application fails to address these points above. The application appears to be silent on satisfying the Park's Affordable Housing Policy requirement and it would seem to me that the proposal fails to embrace the required elements of community, amenity, and aesthetic appeal at the expense of unadulterated commercial gain.)

Flood risk, water and drainage

39.14 There are areas of Newtonmore at risk from flooding (1:200 year event). Within those areas that are at risk from flooding, *a flood risk assessment may be required to accompany any further development proposals.*

(1 Ridewood Grove and adjacent properties are located at the foot of the hills rising to Strone and beyond – while these properties have not suffered from flooding in my experience or knowledge I would be concerned that, with the removal of a significant number of trees currently standing within the proposed area of development together with changes to land and soil composition that will be associated with a new housing development, the risk will increase significantly. I note also that the perfunctory site drainage report to date has not included a site visit and that questions have been raised in respect of previous use, the existence of a quarry and tip, together with possible land contamination – I cannot imagine, therefore, how any consent might be granted without a thorough examination of the sub-soil and a full investigation and explanation of how and where rainwater and snow-melt will make its escape.)

39.15 *Connection to the public sewer will be required of all new development.* However, an interim solution may be acceptable where this accords with the Resources policy. Scottish Water should be contacted at an early stage in relation to water and waste water supplies.

39.16 *All developments must also demonstrate how appropriate Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS) will be incorporated.*

(In respect of CNP plan items 39.15 and 39.16 above, I note that the work required in providing adequate foul water drainage for a number of the proposed houses and to connect with public facilities will be subject to the applicant gaining access through adjoining land. It is highly unlikely that I would be favourable to any application for permission that would include a need to access my property or Ridewood Grove itself, which is currently un-adopted by the Council, in order to link with public foul water drainage.)

In summary, this application is significantly contrary to the Cairngorms National Park local development plan, adopted as it was as a result of local and council consultation, see also:

<http://cairngorms.co.uk/resource/docs/publications/05082005/CNPA.Paper.117.Local%20Plan%20Consultation%20Report%20Part%20Twenty%20Two%20-%20Newtonmore.pdf> – this consultation report reflects a lack of local support for additional housing developments that will encroach upon green areas, fields, views, wildlife, habitat and outlooks.

<http://www.cairngorms.co.uk/resource/docs/publications/09042009/CNPA.Paper.1063.Newtonmore%20scale%20of%20housing%20allocations%20-%20Written.pdf> - section 6.2, CNP response to objections lodged re. development at southern end of village

A zone has already been established for housing development and there is no evidence that additional housing land or development is required. Further, there is nothing in the application to allay concerns regarding over-development of the land, flood risk, drainage issues, or the overall impact on local amenity and quality of surrounding landscape. I recommend that permission is refused.

Yours sincerely

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