

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL
CAITHNESS, SUTHERLAND & EASTER ROSS PLANNING
APPLICATIONS AND REVIEW COMMITTEE
18 DECEMBER 2007

Agenda Item	4.3
Report No	43/07

07/00049/CONCA: Demolition of former funeral parlour at Rose Street, Thurso.

Report by Area Planning and Building Standards Manager

Summary

Application is made for Conservation Area Consent to demolish an unlisted building within a Conservation Area. The building itself has no architectural quality and if removed will be no loss to the character of the Conservation Area. Historic Scotland's Memorandum of Guidance on Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas recommends that the developer should give an indication as to what would replace the demolished building to establish that something can be built on the site which will not detract from the character of the Conservation Area. In this instance the applicant has produced sketch plans showing a possible re-development of the site with a 2½ storey building accommodating six flats. That idea has proved somewhat unpopular with neighbours but it must be realised that this is not an application for the flats – simply for the demolition of the existing building. Any proposal for a replacement building will require a totally separate planning application.

The recommendation is to GRANT Conservation Area Consent to demolish the existing redundant funeral parlour.

Ward Number 2 – Thurso

Applicant: J. Begg, Builders, Millbank Road, Thurso.

1. PROPOSAL

1.1 It is proposed to demolish the existing single storey former funeral parlour at the corner of Rose Street and Cowie Lane in Thurso. The proposal requires Conservation Area Consent because it is an unlisted building in a Conservation Area.

2. PLANNING HISTORY

2.1 None.

3.0 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

3.1 The application was advertised for a 21 day period expiring on 9 March 2007.

3.2 Letters of objection have been received from 12 parties. None of the letters of objection objects to the demolition of the building *per se*, which is what has been applied for. The letters of objection mostly relate to what may be built in its place. However no planning application has been submitted for a replacement building. All that has been provided are some indicative sketches of a proposal which may be submitted in due course. In that respect, those grounds of objection are irrelevant. Some grounds of objection relate to civil matters which are not, again, relevant to the consideration of this application.

4.0 CONSULTATION

4.1 Conservation Architect: No objections.

4.2 Archaeology Unit: No objections.

4.3 Thurso Community Council: No objections subject to there being a time limit for the submission of a future application for the redevelopment of the site.

4.4 Scientific Officer (Contaminated Land): No objections.

5.0 POLICY

5.1 The following Policies are relevant to the assessment of the proposal:-

Highland Structure Plan (2001)

- G2 Design for Sustainability

Caithness Local Plan

- In the Thurso Chapter of the Caithness Local Plan the site lies in a residential area of the Town Centre where the Council will protect and enhance established settled character and amenity. It is also shown to lie within the Thurso Conservation Area.

5.2 The proposal also requires to be assessed against relevant Scottish Planning Policies (SPP); National Planning Policy Guidelines (NPPG); and Planning Advice Notes (PAN). In this instance, in particular, SPP1 – The Planning System.

6.0 PLANNING APPRAISAL

6.1 **Determining Issues** – Section 25 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

6.2 The proposal requires to be assessed against the appropriate policies of the Development Plan, supplementary guidance and National Planning Policy and Guidelines as referred to in the Policy Section. In particular, the proposal requires detailed assessment of the following fundamental issues:

- Whether the principle of development is appropriate in terms of policy.
- Whether the layout of development is appropriate.
- The impact on the amenity of the area and residents
- Other material issues raised by the objectors.

6.3 The building which is proposed to be demolished is a single storey 'shed' having rendered walls and a corrugated roof. It is devoid of architectural merit and its demolition will not harm the character of the Conservation Area as it makes no positive contribution to that character. Its demolition will, in fact, present an opportunity to design and erect something of aesthetic quality.

6.4 That said, I do not consider that it is necessary to consider proposals to redevelop the site at the present time as demolition of the building will result in an immediate improvement in the character of the Conservation Area. However, I do acknowledge the point raised by the Community Council regarding the need to require the submission of detailed proposals for the site within a reasonable timescale in order to avoid leaving a gap site.

6.5 I therefore recommend that this application be granted subject to an appropriate condition in relation to the submission of detailed proposals.

RECOMMENDATION

Grant Conservation Area Consent subject to the following condition:

1. That within two years of the date of the Conservation Area Consent hereby approved a planning application for the redevelopment of the site shall be submitted to the Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of the character and amenity of the Thurso Conservation Area.

In the event that Committee agrees the recommendation then the application will require to be notified to Scottish Ministers.

Signature:

Designation: Area Planning & Building Standards Manager

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Background Papers: As referred to in the report above and case file reference number 07/00049/CONCA

Date: 10 December, 2007

