

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL
CAITHNESS, SUTHERLAND & EASTER ROSS PLANNING
APPLICATIONS AND REVIEW COMMITTEE
15 JULY 2008

Agenda Item	2.11
Report No	43/08

07/00240/FULCA: CHANGE OF USE OF AGRICULTURAL STORE TO HOUSE AND ERECTION OF SUN PORCH THERETO AND ALTERATIONS AND EXTENSION TO EXISTING HOUSE AT PENNYLAND HOUSE, THURSO

07/00252/LBCCA: CHANGE OF USE OF AGRICULTURAL STORE TO HOUSE AND ERECTION OF SUN PORCH THERETO AND ALTERATIONS AND EXTENSION TO EXISTING HOUSE AT PENNYLAND HOUSE, THURSO

Report by Area Planning and Building Standards Manager

SUMMARY

Applications are made for planning permission and for listed building consent for a change of use of an existing agricultural store to a dwellinghouse and for the erection of a sun porch onto it, and for alterations and extension to the existing main Pennyland House. The applications have been subject to much discussion between the applicant, his architect, the Council's Conservation Architect and Historic Scotland, as well as with staff of the Caithness Area Planning Office. As a result a number of alternative schemes have been investigated but it would seem that those negotiations have now come to an end and the applications need to be determined in their currently submitted form. These proposals do not find favour with the Council's Conservation Architect or with Historic Scotland and neither believes that the proposals are an acceptable extension to this prominent Category B Listed Building. As such the Thurso Members were advised that it was the intention of the Service to issue delegated refusals for both these applications but they have requested that the applications be brought before Committee for determination.

The recommendation is to refuse planning permission and listed building consent.

Ward Number 2 –Thurso

Applicant: Thurso Bay Trading Company Limited per Mr R Taylor, Pennyland House, Pennyland Farm, Thurso.

1. PROPOSAL

1.1 Pennyland House and the attached steading comprise a Category B Listed Building. As part of this application it is proposed to convert part of the steading from an agricultural store to a house and to erect a sun porch onto the west elevation of that building, and separately to erect a 1¾ storey extension to the gable of the main Pennyland House on the north elevation facing the sea.

- 1.2 The converted agricultural building would comprise a kitchen, dining area, hall, living room, bathroom, master bedroom and sun porch on the ground floor, with two upper floor bedrooms.
- 1.3 The proposed extension onto the gable has been deliberately designed to be of contemporary design in order to be apparent that it was an extension of its time and will clearly read as being of a different age than the original building. The materials however still reflect the fact that the main building is a Category B Listed Building. The proposed new extension onto the main Pennyland House would be to the north of the building with much of it being on the gable although some of it would wrap round to the west elevation. This proposed extension would provide a dining/kitchen, dining room and WC on the ground floor and a living room and master bedroom on the upper floor. Currently the north elevation of the existing Pennyland House is essentially a gable facing the sea and does not have any meaningful provision for taking advantage of the spectacular views towards the sea to the north. The proposed extension would redress that issue.

2. PLANNING HISTORY

- 2.1 Pennyland House has been listed since February 1975 and as such is one of the earliest listings in the Highlands. The property has connections with Colonel Sir William Alexander Smith the founder of the Boys Brigade who was born there on 27 October 1954 and lived there until he was 15.
- 2.2 A previous application for a change of use from a derelict farmhouse to agricultural store was granted in February 2006 although that is now part of the proposal to revert to being a dwellinghouse as part of these applications.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- 3.1 The application was advertised on 18 May 2007 as being one for Listed Building Consent, the period for representations expiring on 8 June 2007.
- 3.2 One letter of objection has been received on the grounds that the design of the extension to the seaward side is out of character with the farmhouse which is in the Caithness Tradition of an original frontage.

4. CONSULTATIONS

- 4.1 **Scottish Water:** No objections.
- 4.2 **Transport Scotland Trunk Roads Network Management Directorate:** No objections subject to the imposition of certain conditions.
- 4.3 **TEC Services Contaminated Land Unit:** No objections.
- 4.4 **Highland Council Archaeology Unit:** No objections subject to a condition being imposed requiring a photographic record being made before any alterations take place.

- 4.5 **Highland Council Conservation Architect:** Comments that proposals and discussion with regard to the conversion of the steading and alterations to the house have been ongoing since 2004 and that indeed a meeting did take place with the applicant's architect and with a representative of Historic Scotland on site. On more than one occasion the applicant and his architect have been advised to delete the extension to the gable wall but after insisting on such a development they were advised that it should be restricted to single storey and not impinge on or overlay the gable window to the front room. It was suggested that it could take the form of a contrasting modern conservatory style structure. The Conservation Architect notes that the current proposals are contrary to all previous advice with the extension to the north gable elevation comprising a 1¾ storey structure which is almost centred on the gable window which it was specifically requested should not be encroached upon. He considers and strongly believes that the proposed extension to the north gable wall to Pennyland House is undesirable as it will detract from the special character and appearance of the building. He further considers that the proposed sun porch to the new house to be created to the rear is an overly large extension and with its flat roof is out of character with the main building. He therefore regrets that he can not lend his support to the proposals as submitted.
- 4.6 **Historic Scotland:** They do not believe that this scheme is sympathetic to the historic building and that the current proposals do not mitigate any of the concerns which they have previously expressed. They comment that in the course of this listed building consent application they have set out principles which they believe would produce an acceptable extension to the building but that this advice has not been taken into account by the applicants. They do not believe that this scheme is an acceptable extension to this prominent Category B Listed Building.

5. POLICY

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

Highland Structure Plan:

- G2 Design for Sustainability
- BC5 Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas

Caithness Local Plan (Adopted September 2002):

- Paragraph 21 of the Thurso Chapter of the Caithness Local Plan is applicable. It states "At Pennyland Farm 1.2 ha of land is allocated for a hotel. Detailed proposals should retain, respect and incorporate the Listed farm house and steading in the design and layout, as well as interpretation of the historic interest, possibly in a small museum relative to Sir William Smith and the Boys Brigade. An opportunity exists to create a well designed quality development in this key location adjacent to the A9 Trunk road. Vehicular access is preferred from Castlegreen Road and provision should be made for associated improvements, including upgrading of the junction with the A9. Associated outdoor recreation uses could be provided over adjoining land to the west to retain its open character".

5.2 The proposal also requires to be assessed against the Memorandum of Guidance on Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas published by Historic Scotland in 1998.

6. 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 applicant and objectors.

6.3 The overriding issue to be considered here is how appropriate these proposals are with regard to this being a Category B Listed Building. Whilst the proposal to change the former agricultural building to the rear into a house is acceptable in principle, it forms part of this overall application. The main concern would appear to be the principle of putting an extension onto the north gable elevation of the main Pennyland House. In this respect, it is quite clear that the Council's Conservation Architect and Historic Scotland are very much opposed, not just to the principle of such an extension, but also to the particular extension proposed in terms of its size and massing, and the fact that it will, in their opinion, be extremely prominent and will adversely affect the character of the Listed Building to an unreasonable extent. Negotiations have been ongoing for some considerable time but now it seems that an impasse has been reached whereby the applicant wishes the application to be determined in its currently submitted form.

6.4 These two applications therefore require to be determined and, given the firm stances taken by both the Conservation Architect and Historic Scotland, and also in light of the objections submitted by the Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland, I see little alternative than to recommend to Committee that these applications be refused.

RECOMMENDATION

Refuse planning permission and listed building consent for the following reasons:

1. The proposed extension on the north seaward side of the Category B Listed Building would have an unacceptable and deleterious effect on the character and appearance of the Listed Building and would be an incongruous and alien addition thereto.

2. The proposed extensions to the Category B Listed Building do not comply with advice given in the Memorandum of Guidance on Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas published by Historic Scotland dated 1998.

It should be noted that if Members are minded to grant the Listed Building Consent application then, as the property is a Category B Listed Building, formal notification would have to be given to Historic Scotland.

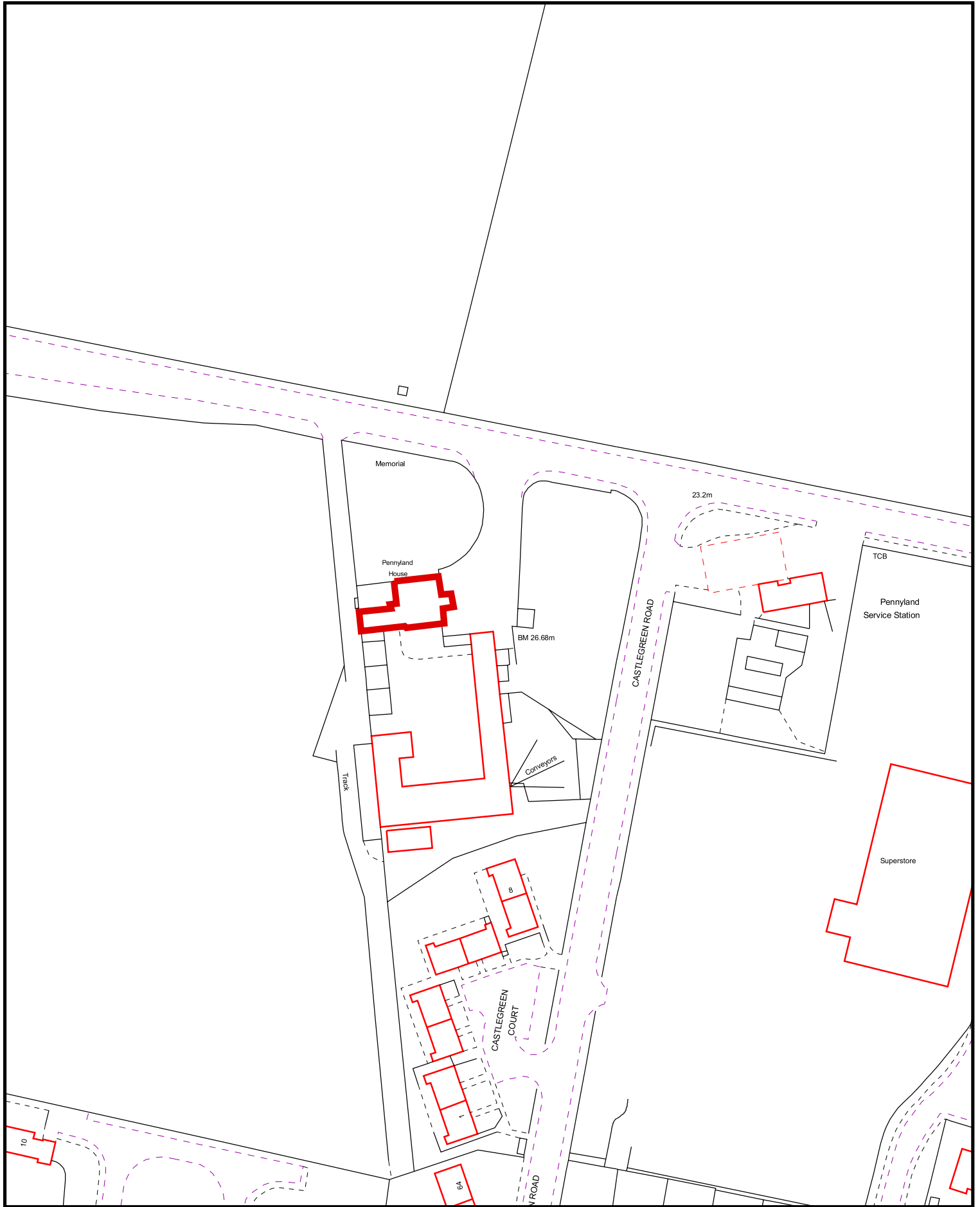
Signature: Allan J Todd

Designation: Area Planning & Building Standards Manager

Author: Iain Ewart 01955 607751

Background Papers: As referred to in the report above

Date: 7 July 2008



07/00240/FULCA & 07/00252/LBCCA
 Change of use from agricultural
 store to house, alterations and extension
 to existing house
 Pennyland House, Thurso, KW147JU

Thurso Bay Trading Co. Ltd.,
 Per Knight And MacDonald Architects,
 6 Princes Street, Thurso, KW14 7BQ

Date: 8th July 2008

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