

18/00644/FUL

Extension to track - Achriabhach, Glen Nevis

Mountaineering Scotland opposes this application.

The proposed track will be a significant extension and highly visible (as is the current track). This is demonstrated by the applicant's own photographs. There appears to be little restoration or mitigation of this existing track on steep ground and, despite searching the Highland planning portal, we could find nothing regarding this track to check what measures, if any, are to be undertaken.

The applicant refers to the work undertaken in 2012 to support their "landscaping" work. As it is now 2018 there photographs would cast doubt on the effectiveness of their efforts. Indeed Photograph 1 cannot be used to argue that "...the section upgraded in 2012, which already blends subtly with the adjacent topography". The track may eventually be (partially) covered by the tree canopy but as these are native trees that may take many decades.

Various reasons are put forward to justify the extension of the track but each is unconvincing by itself so the applicant seems to have bundled them together for the purposes of this application in the hope this will add more weight.

Inspecting and maintaining fencing does not require such a large, engineered, track. Neither does husbandry of the trees. Both tasks can be completed with an ATV track build to the standards laid down in the SNH document "Constructed tracks in the Scottish Uplands". Such a wide track is certainly not required by hillwalkers.

Fire is a forestry hazard but if we follow the logic of this application there should be large engineered tracks everywhere that forestry exists in order to provide for the possibility of a fire, however small the chance. We note there is a nearby forestry track which ends at NN139676 - it makes more sense for the applicant to negotiate the use of this with a possible extension. This would have far less impact.

The environmental report, mentioned in the design statement, was not available on the planning portal.

*Submitted through The Highland Council planning portal by Davie Black, Access & Conservation Officer, 12 March 2018*