

By email to: [eplanning@highland.gov.uk](mailto:eplanning@highland.gov.uk)

Ms Lucy Prinz  
Planning Officer  
The Highland Council  
Glenurquhart Road  
Inverness  
IV3 5NX

17 January 2022

Dear Ms Prinz

**Demolition of existing cottage, erection of replacement dwelling, renovation and alterations to outbuilding to create ancillary unit, Allt-Na-Reigh Glencoe Ballachulish PH49 4HX**

**Planning Reference: 21/05434/FUL**

Mountaineering Scotland **objects** to the proposal to demolish and rebuild the cottage at Allt na Reigh, Glencoe, on grounds that the design and scale of this particular renovation at this specific location is not appropriate. It is our opinion that it does not blend in with the landscape or with the style of other buildings seen along the Glen.

Mountaineering Scotland is a membership organisation with more than 15,000 members and is the only recognised representative organisation for hill walkers, climbers, mountaineers and ski tourers who live in Scotland or who enjoy Scotland's mountains. We represent, support and promote Scottish mountaineering, and provide training and information to mountain users for safety, self-reliance and the enjoyment of our mountain environment.

This cottage is situated in a prominent position in a highly-valued scenic glen, in a National Scenic Area. It is not overstating the case to say that the location and the prospect westward to The Three Sisters can be said to be one of Scotland's most iconic views, along with the views along the Glen from viewpoints on the southern summits and hill paths.

It is our opinion, which we trust The Highland Council shares, that anything which impacts that view with an imposing modern structure should be carefully considered.

In addition to its important location and place in the landscape, the building has further cultural and significance, it being the former home of Hamish MacInnes, the world renowned and innovative Scottish mountaineer.

We understand the desire to re-develop the existing cottage and have no issue with renovation of a cottage on the existing development footprint or the principle of demolishing the existing cottage to enable it to be replaced with a new build. Having looked at the proposed house design, we have concerns with what is proposed in the architect's Design Statement.

The cantilever construction, while creating a personal space for the residents secluded from the busy A82, does seem to elevate the building above the roadside, making it appear to be standing proud in the landscape.

This has the effect of drawing the eye to the structure itself and away from the scenic landscape, effectively imposing the building on the landscape, rather than within the landscape as the existing cottage does.

The mountains here are well-loved and have been frequented by generations of walkers and climbers and the glen itself is a popular tourist attraction. We think it is a serious omission of this planning application that there is scant consideration of how the renovated dwelling and outbuilding would look from the popular hill paths and crags lying south of the A82, especially the descent into the Glen from Coire Gabhail, and Buachaille Etive Beag.

In addition, it is not clear from the Design Statement how the historical and cultural value of the outbuilding is to be reflected in its restoration and renovation. Our understanding is the building was used as workshop by Hamish MacInnes as was where the first metal shafted ice axe (which played a role in revolutionising winter climbing at the time) and the MacInnes stretcher (which continues to be used by mountain rescue and emergency services across the world), were developed.

It is disappointing that despite this being specifically referenced at the community consultation on 7 September 2021 there is little recognition of that in the Design Statement. The paragraph describing the public consultation concluded that there was an “emphasis on reinforcing the positive effect Hamish MacInnes had on the land with the outbuilding being a symbol of this.”

The Design Statement merely states that there is an intention to restore the outbuilding which is of historical importance, further adding that the intent is for “retaining and converting the outbuilding into habitable associated accommodation.” The associated elevation plans look little like the existing outbuilding, making it difficult to see how the claim of reinforcing the heritage of Hamish MacInnes is substantiated.

We urge The Highland Council to refuse planning permission on grounds that the siting and design of this particular development at this specific location is inappropriate and would detract from the quality and character of the landscape in Glen Coe.

Yours sincerely



**Stuart Younie**

**CEO, Mountaineering Scotland**

