

NATIONAL TRUST FOR SCOTLAND MEDIA RELEASE

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Charity decries renewed threat to Culloden Conservation Area

Scotland's largest conservation charity has signalled its intent to oppose a new attempt to develop TreeTop Stables, Faebuie, Culloden Moor as a holiday complex.

The National Trust for Scotland opposed the original planning application back in May 2018 - the application was subsequently turned down by the Highland Council.

The Trust owns a key part of the battlefield of Culloden but not the land on which the stables are built. Nevertheless, the charity has raised its voice in the past against developments which threatened the integrity of the wider historic battlefield, which ranged over a large area on 16 April 1746, and its setting.

The wider historic battlefield has had Conservation Area status applied to it by Highland Council. This was a protective measure put in place after the Scottish Reporter overturned a decision by the Council to refuse planning permission for a luxury housing development at nearby Viewhill Farm, which, as predicted, now represents an intrusive and unwelcome presence within prominent view of the core site.

This re-submitted proposal is once again based on the conversion of the TreeTop equestrian centre, which as it currently exists has little intrusive impact, to enable construction of holiday, leisure and hospitality facilities.

Clea Warner, the National Trust for Scotland's General Manager for the Highlands & Islands said:

"I can see nothing especially 'new' about this new submission.

"The previous application was turned down by Highland Council because it wasn't sufficiently sensitive to the surrounding woodland, and undermined the Conservation Area. While the 2020 application appears to suggest additional landscaping, quite frankly I can't otherwise see much difference from the preceding 2018 submission.

"The application mentions that about 13 accommodation units would be built, but references 16 elsewhere. By our calculations, assuming the holiday accommodation is all new floor space, the applicants seem to be proposing 994 square metres of new

buildings. These 13 or 16 lodges would be raised up on stilts, close to two storeys in height, with each appearing to be about the size of a static caravan.

“Our 2018 objection was based on four main issues: protection, conservation and, where appropriate, enhancement of the key historic landscape characteristics, particularly in the context of the Conservation Area; the scale of the development and its impact on woodland; the possibility of ‘development creep’ changing current land use; and, the possible precedent this would set thereby encouraging more developers to try their luck. Nothing in this fresh application alleviates any of these concerns.

“To be clear, we do not object to every planning application that comes forward around Culloden. Where changes to existing buildings or land do not result in a visual impact, change of use or materially extend the ‘footprint’, we tend not have concerns. Unfortunately, in this case, from what we have seen, our objection would be fully justified.”

The Battle of Culloden was the final confrontation of the Jacobite rising of 1745 and the last pitched battle fought on British soil. On 16 April 1746, the Jacobite forces of Prince Charles Edward Stuart were decisively defeated by Government troops on Culloden Moor.

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Notes for Editors

The National Trust for Scotland is the charity that celebrates and protects Scotland’s heritage. It relies on the support of its members and donors to carry out its important work of caring for the natural and built heritage of Scotland for everyone to enjoy.

From coastlines to castles, art to architecture, wildlife to wildernesses, the National Trust for Scotland exists to protect the national and natural treasures we all love. To plan your visit today, enter your postcode at www.nts.org.uk.