

THE
FIFE ARMS

BRAEMAR

Press release

Highlands Hospitality Ltd is granted planning permission for The Fife Arms, Braemar



Photo: Moxon Architects

Highlands Hospitality Ltd (HHL) is pleased to announce that it has been granted planning permission to sensitively restore The Fife Arms hotel in Braemar, a significant landmark in the scenic village famed for the Braemar Gathering annual highland games, the Cairngorms National Park and its Royal Deeside connections. HHL will re-establish The Fife Arms as a first class hotel offering exceptional and unique accommodation with approximately 45 bedrooms, a restaurant and facilities for the local community as well as national and international tourists.

The project was discussed at the Cairngorms National Park Authority planning committee meeting in Ballater on Friday 19 February 2016, where the application was formally approved. Eleanor Mackintosh, planning committee convener for Cairngorms National Park, says:

‘The owners of the Fife Arms are to be congratulated – I am delighted to see this application before us and welcome the significant investment being made which will have a very positive impact on Braemar and will enhance the tourism offering in the National Park.’

HHL is working with Crathie-based Scottish architects Moxon and interior designer Russell Sage on plans to revive the landmark building through careful restoration and discreet remodelling combined with modest contemporary interventions. Their work will safeguard an important part of the village and bring it back to its former glory, ensuring the economic and

FOR PRESS ENQUIRIES, PLEASE CONTACT:
AMELIA REDGRIFT
+44 7901 710 312 | AMELIA@HIGHLANDSHOSPITALITY.CO.UK

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cultural vitality of Braemar and Upper Deeside. The prominent inclusion of contemporary art and design within the sensitively restored historic interiors of the building will create a unique and transformative experience for guests.

HHL will adopt a 'Construction Management' approach for the restoration, which will ensure that local trades and suppliers will be given every opportunity to participate in the project. Managing the process will be the Edinburgh-based project and construction managers GLM, who have established an office based in Braemar.

It is anticipated that the hotel will re-open in early 2018 and will employ at least 50 people. Edward Workman, CEO of HHL says:

'This is an exciting moment for Highlands Hospitality, The Fife Arms and the village of Braemar. The much needed renovations will start immediately and we have confidence that the transformation of this beautiful and historic hotel will bring huge benefit and opportunity to the local community, attract visitors from all over the world, and safeguard the Grade-B listed building for future generations.'

Through a process of public consultation, the new hotel will provide the local community with much-needed accommodation, facilities and services. Federica Bertolini has joined the project team as General Manager from her previous role as the manager of the Hotel Tresanton at St Mawes in Cornwall, where she worked for the past 11 years. Federica Bertolini says:

'Braemar and surrounding areas are bursting with hospitality talent. Scots are warm and welcoming, it is in their genes. I cannot wait to see how the hotel will once again become a focal point in the village and a catalyst for what is already an incredibly active community, full of plans and ideas. It will also offer many young people a real opportunity to live and work in this area.'

The Fife Arms hotel has long been a focal point at the centre of Braemar and there will be little perceptible change to the exterior of the building. The majestic 19th-century façades will be revitalised but the distinct decorative elements that characterise the building will be retained in their entirety. The major architectural intervention involves the demolition of uncharacteristic and unsightly 20th-century additions to the main building that are the result of poor planning. These extensions are to be replaced with a series of efficient and architecturally sympathetic structures that complement and enhance the design of the rest of the hotel.

HHL will open up the hotel for public use as much as possible, including a new central courtyard at its heart with a sheltered external space. A line of 'stripped bark' tree trunk columns will support a planted heather roof. Locally salvaged granite will be used elsewhere in the project to match existing buildings and untreated timber cladding will be adopted, which as it ages will develop a silver grey patina, complementing the stonework. Sustainability is fundamental to the longevity of the hotel and so the new build elements in the proposal will also be constructed to a very high level of thermal and environmental performance.

HHL has mounted an exhibition of archival photographs in the windows of The Fife Arms with a special focus on the history, landscape and culture of Braemar and its residents. These fascinating historical photographs, sourced from the Aberdeen-based George Washington Wilson and Co. collection, are providing inspiration for the restoration project and will continue to enliven the façade of the hotel during construction.

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HHL is owned by Iwan and Manuela Wirth, who have a home in the Braemar area and are both passionate about Scottish heritage, local craftsmanship, and the landscape, wildlife and environment found in the Dee Valley. They will bring their love of contemporary art and design to the historic interiors of the building, creating an unforgettable environment of traditional Scottish hospitality.

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Notes to Editors

About Iwan and Manuela Wirth

Iwan and Manuela Wirth are the owners of Highlands Hospitality Ltd and co-Presidents of internationally acclaimed art gallery, Hauser & Wirth. In addition to galleries in London, Zurich, New York and Los Angeles, in July 2014 Hauser & Wirth opened Hauser & Wirth Somerset, a rural arts centre which encompasses the Durslade Farmhouse guesthouse and the Roth Bar & Grill, an exceptional restaurant and bar where seasonal local produce and art come together in a relaxed and welcoming environment. Hauser & Wirth Somerset has become an important attraction for the local town of Bruton and an internationally acclaimed destination, attracting over 200,000 visitors from all over the world since it opened in July 2014. Iwan and Manuela Wirth were jointly named number 1 in ArtReview's 2015 'Power 100', a list of the most influential figures in the art world.

The Fife Arms will build on Iwan and Manuela Wirth's experience with Hauser & Wirth Somerset. It will reflect their interest in heritage, tradition, contemporary art and culture. They hope to bring their love of art and design to the historic interiors of the building. This begins with the collaboration with artist and poet Alec Finlay, who is collaborating on the research and design of the Fife Arms, responding to elements in the landscape and culture of Upper Deeside, ensuring that these are represented within the building and remain central to the philosophy of the project.

The History of The Fife Arms Hotel

Built in the 19th Century by the Duke of Fife, The Fife Arms hotel is a large and highly distinctive part of the streetscape in Braemar. It dominates with its imposing scale and displays many of the traditional architectural characteristics of the area with its timber bargeboards, pink and grey granite and its multi-gabled principal elevation. Its distinctive regional style is also reflected in the Aberdeen-bonded stonework. The building has retained all of its timber sash and case windows with their distinctive Arts and Crafts multi-paned upper sashes, and a large number of original chimney stacks. The building is evidence of the expansion of the tourist trade in Braemar in the wake of Queen Victoria's visits and purchase of Balmoral, and the coming of the railway to the area.

Plans of the hotel by A Marshall Mackenzie (undated) are held by the National Archive of Scotland. Mackenzie was an architect of national repute. A member of a major architectural dynasty, he began his career in the office of David Bryce. The majority of his work was undertaken in northern Scotland – among many other projects he was responsible for the rebuilding of Marischal College, Aberdeen. Royal patronage demonstrated his ability and fame; he was responsible for the design of Crathie Kirk in 1893 and was subsequently chosen by the Duke and Duchess of Fife for the new Mar Lodge in 1895. Mackenzie was also the Architect for two prestigious projects in central London, the Waldorf Astoria Hotel and Australia House. The Fife Arms is a category B listed building.

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About Moxon Architects

Versatility, experience and a willingness to experiment give Moxon the impetus and ability to tackle a wide variety of projects. With offices in Scotland and London, the practice has a varied client base, across commercial, private domestic and local authority sectors. The portfolio encompasses workplace and office design, bridge and special structure design, masterplanning and residential design.

Moxon Architects design process strives for the production of work that is economically responsible, environmentally appropriate and spatially elegant. This pragmatic tendency is combined with a fascination for architectural effect and beauty. The practice firmly believes in the notion that sustainability in building should be as much about long term appeal as it is about energy use and materiality. Current clients include the Royal Parks Foundation, Transport for London, the Cairngorms National Park Authority and Aberdeenshire Council.

www.moxonarchitects.com

About Russell Sage Studio

Russell Sage Studio was founded in 2004 by Russell Sage following a short career in fashion. Now a team of 32, Russell Sage Studio's passionate designers are from diverse and highly creative backgrounds. The team works with a multi-design approach, which often supports hospitality clients far beyond the traditional design of interiors.

Russell Sage has a passion for historic interiors and a real understanding for period restoration and rare British craftsmanship. This has led to commissions for institutions such as the National Trust's Avebury Manor, Dover Castle for English Heritage and St Paul's Cathedral (vestments and altar cloths).

Previous projects include: the redesign of the Savoy Grill for Gordon Ramsay, Quaglino's and Pont de la Tour for D&D London, The RAC Members Club, two Zetter Town House Hotels for the Zetter Group and the launch of the Bounce Ping Pong brand in the UK and the USA. Russell Sage Studio also successfully completed a seven year project to entirely redesign the Goring Hotel to transform it into a leading international family hotel, a project that included the design and installation of the Royal Suite on the roof of the hotel in time for its first guest, the future Duchess of Cambridge on the eve of the Royal Wedding.

www.russellsagestudio.co.uk

About GLM

GLM is a long-established, Edinburgh-based firm of construction professionals providing a full range of project management and design services. The firm specialises in regeneration projects, often working far from the main centres of population. GLM was the lead consultant for the highly successful regeneration project centred on the Inn at John O'Groats. The in-house GLM professional team includes project and construction managers, building surveyors and architects. GLM's project and construction management division is headed up by Pierre Puyrigaud, whose background includes engineering, development and project management. For The Fife Arms, Pierre will be working closely with Paul Brooks and Adrian Black of Cromar Brooks Quantity Surveyors in continuation of a well-established professional relationship between the two firms.

www.weareglm.com

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