

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL
CAITHNESS, SUTHERLAND & EASTER ROSS
PLANNING APPLICATIONS AND REVIEW COMMITTEE –
18 DECEMBER 2007

Agenda Item	4.4
Report No	44/07

07/00394/FULSU – Erection of 1.5 storey house. Installation of ground source heat system. Installation of septic tank and soakaway. Formation of new access at Land 50m South West of Ardachu House, Brora, Sutherland

Report by Area Planning and Building Standards Manager

SUMMARY

The proposal is to erect a new house with septic tank and soakaway, install a ground source heat system and form a new access on land 50m south west of Ardachu House, Brora. The application is being reported to Committee as the proposal is a departure from the development plan.

The recommendation is to GRANT outline planning permission subject to conditions.

Applicant – Miss J Dunn, 'Broomhill', Academy Street, Brora

Ward Number 5 – East Sutherland and Edderton

1. PROPOSAL

- 1.1 The site lies on croftland to the north-west of the Ardachu public road. It is relatively level with an existing field access at the south-east corner and a low-voltage power line running parallel to the inside of the south-west boundary. A telephone line runs along the road verge parallel to the south-east boundary. 'Ardachu Cottage' stands approximately 5m to the south-west and 'Ardachu House' approximately 30m to the north-east beyond a band of trees. 'Chadaru' stands approximately 35 metres to the east. Open fields cover the remaining land to the south-east and the slope to the north-west has a thick covering of gorse. The proposal is to erect a new house and install a ground source heat system, septic tank and soakaway on the site and to form a new access to the public road.

2. PLANNING HISTORY

- 2.1 Application reference number 07/00108/FULSU: Erection of house. Installation of geothermal underground pipes, new septic tank and soakaway. Formation of new access onto public road.
- 2.2 This application did not include any additional supporting information and was refused under delegated powers, as it was a departure from the development plan.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- 3.1 The application was advertised as a departure from the provisions of the development plan for a period of 21 days, expiring on 22 October 2007.
- 3.2 No letters of representation have been received.

4. CONSULTATIONS

4.1 Internal Consultees:

- TEC Services – No objections subject to the applicant meeting all the criteria listed in the Standard Conditions.

4.2 External Consultees:

- Scottish Water – No objections. There may be issues within the Water Network.
- Brora Community Council – No objections.

5. POLICY

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

Highland Structure Plan:

- G2: Design for Sustainability
- H3: Housing in the Countryside

South & East Sutherland Local Plan:

- ENV 2 favours development unless this would significantly affect important local features.
- 12(d) restricts housing to 2 per croft and recommends a spacing of 70m between houses.

- 5.2 The proposal also requires to be assessed against the following relevant Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) and Planning Advice Note (PAN):
- SPP 3 – Planning for Housing
 - PAN 67 – Housing Quality

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
- 6.3 The proposed development would be located on croftland to the north-west of the Ardachu public road, between 'Ardachu House' and 'Ardachu Cottage'. The first impression of this site is that it would be a logical infill plot and would round off the existing knot of houses. Though the site of application extends close to the three adjacent houses, the proposed new house would be positioned between 35 and 75m away from them.
- 6.4 There are no technical difficulties with the proposal.
- 6.5 Policy – In my assessment the proposal meets with the requirements of Policy G2: Design for Sustainability, as it does not significantly impact on habitats, species, landscape or scenery. It also demonstrates sensitive siting in keeping with the local character and historic and natural environment and is of appropriate scale, design and materials. In addition, it would not impact significantly on the amenity and privacy enjoyed by the houses to the north-east and south-west.

- 6.6 The proposal complies with the provisions of Policy H3: Housing in the Countryside, as it is of an appropriate location, scale, design and materials. I would also contend that although it does not accord with the 70m spacing between houses, as recommended in landward policy 12(d), the proposal does fit within the existing pattern of development. The two existing houses to the north-west of the public road follow a linear pattern, which would be rounded off by the proposed new house, while still leaving reasonable separation distances.
- 6.7 Local Plan Policy ENV2 is broadly supportive of development, stating that “The Council will favour development unless this would significantly affect important local features”. However, landward policy 12(d) recommends a spacing of 70m between houses. The proposal does not comply with this provision, though it would sit comfortably within the existing knot of houses, filling a gap between 'Ardachu House' and 'Ardachu Cottage'.
- 6.8 The proposed house is of a traditional 1.5 storey design with a 45° roof pitch, dormer windows and gable chimneys. The external walls would be finished in a white harl and the roof in grey Redland 'Richmond' slate-style tiles. These features would comply with the provisions of The Highland Council Design Guidance for Housing in the Countryside.
- 6.9 Other material considerations - The agent has provided an additional supporting statement listing the reasons why the applicant seeks to build on this site. They are as follows:
1. The applicant currently lives with her parents.
 2. The proposal is for a new “Croft house” on a bareland croft.
 3. The proposal is for an “operational need” on the croft.
 4. The applicant is the registered tenant of the croft.
 5. The applicant has been accepted by the Scottish Executive for the housing grant scheme.
 6. The applicant's family have been involved with crofting going back several generations.

7. Under the heading “Local Economic Growth Prospects” of the South & East Sutherland Local Plan, subheading 1.19 states “Crofting is a critical component of agriculture and social development in the area. Income continues to be supplemented by other employment and diversification initiatives to allow crofting to survive. The Croft Entrants Scheme, promoted by Caithness and Sutherland Enterprise (CASE) and the Crofters Commission to encourage young people into crofting, together with Crofter Forestry, are important in this regard. The Council also supports land transfer to tenants on terms which recognise ongoing financial burdens as well as potential development opportunities”.
8. The proposed house location was selected for the following reasons:
 - a. It follows the pattern of existing house locations on the adjacent crofts.
 - b. It is tucked close to the bottom of a hill which provides shelter from the north and creates a sun trap to the front part of the house.
 - c. The house is to have geothermal heating and the proposed location is more thermal efficient.
 - d. It connects easily and safely with the existing public road.
 - e. It leaves the maximum amount of remaining ground for crofting purposes.
 - f. It ties in conveniently and economically with existing services.
 - g. It allows the applicant to see the remainder of her croft from the house which is particularly useful for checking the safety of sheep / cattle grazing on the croft.
 - h. Any part of the croft which is outwith the recommended 70m spacing from existing dwellings is unsuitable for building purposes.

- 6.10 In my view, this justification is sufficient to allow a relaxation of the recommended spacing between houses, as set out in the landward policy 12(d) of the South & East Sutherland Local Plan. The application site is on a bareland croft and a new house is justified on the basis of operational need. Alternative sites to the south-east of the public road were discussed at the pre-application stage. However, these would not fit in with the established pattern of development and would be located on higher-quality agricultural land, significantly reducing the viability of the croft.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The proposal is a departure from the development plan. However, it is considered that it is a minor and acceptable departure, as it reflects the established pattern of development and accords with Policies G2: Design for Sustainability, H3: Housing in the Countryside and ENV 2.

RECOMMENDATION

Grant planning permission subject to the following conditions:

- 1 Except as otherwise provided by the terms of this permission, the developer shall construct and operate the development in accordance with the plans and supporting information submitted with the application and docketed as relative hereto with no deviation therefrom unless otherwise approved in writing by the Planning Authority.

Reason: In order to clarify the terms of the permission hereby granted and to ensure that the development is implemented as approved.

- 2 The roof of the house shall be finished in grey Redland Richmond slate-effect tiles, or as may otherwise be agreed in writing with the Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of amenity and for the avoidance of doubt.

- 3 Prior to the commencement of development, the developer shall submit exact details of the proposed external wall finish for the approval in writing of the Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of amenity and for the avoidance of doubt.

- 4 All access arrangements shall be provided to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority, in consultation with the Roads Authority, and in accordance with the Schedule attaching to this permission, prior to occupation of the house.

Reason: In the interests of road safety.

- 5 All drainage arrangements shall be provided to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority, in consultation with the Scottish Environment Protection Agency, the Water Authority and Building Standards Authority.

Reason: In the interests of amenity.

Informatives

- 1 I enclose a copy of Scottish Water's comments for your information.

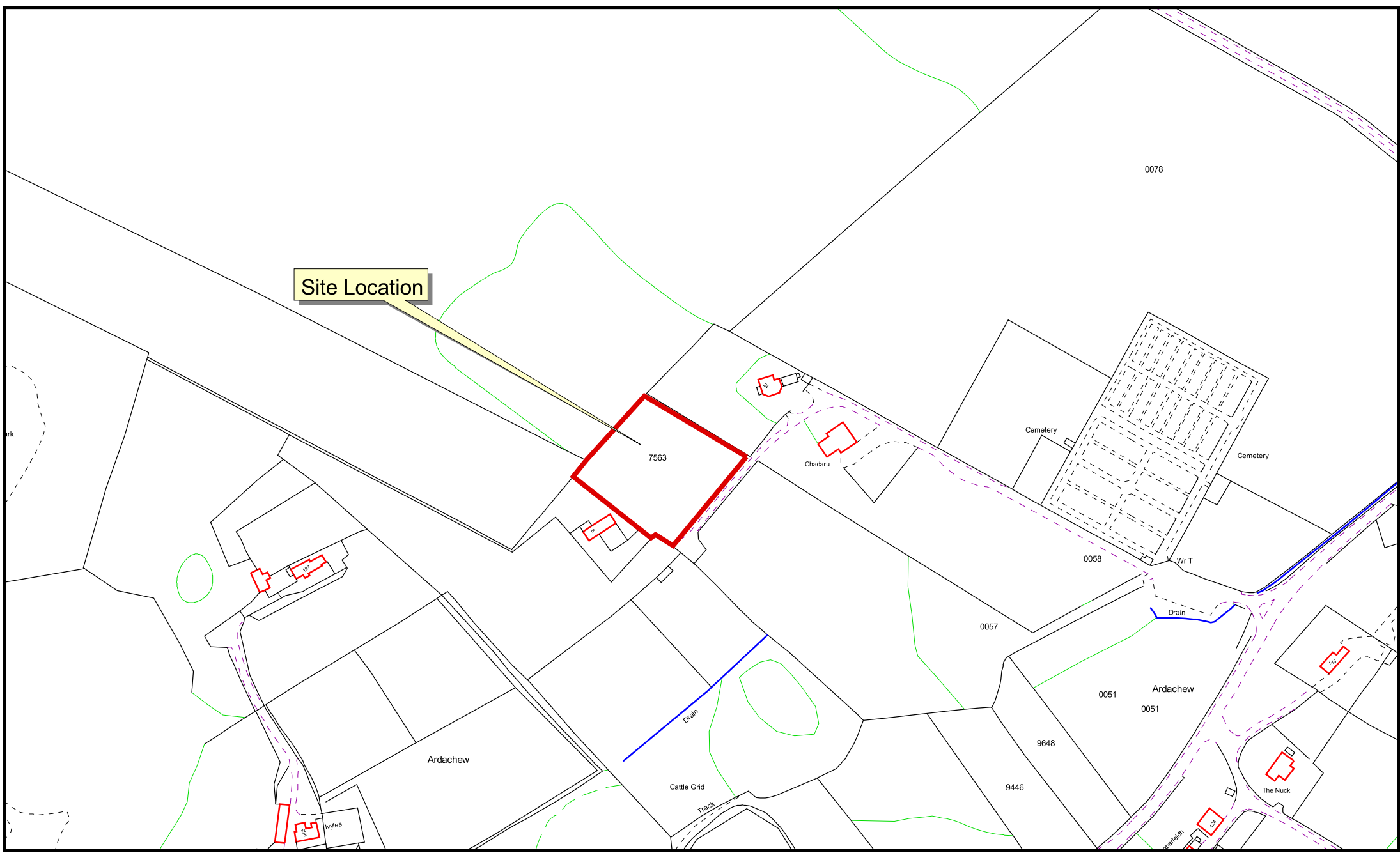
Signature:

Designation: Area Planning & Building Standards Manager

Author: Craig McMurtrie – Graduate Planner 01862 812058

Background Papers: As referred to in the report above and case file reference number 07/00394/FULSU

Date: 04/12/07



Site Location

7563

0078

Cemetery

Chadaru

Cemetery

0058

Wr T

Drain

0057

0051

Ardachew

0051

9648

9446

Ardachew

Cattle Grid

Track

The Nuck

Ivyea



07/00394/FULSU
Erection of 1.5 storey house. Installation of ground source heat system.
Installation of septic tank and soakaway system. Formation of new access at
Land 50m West of Ardachu House, Brora.

SUPPLIED BY THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Miss J Dunn
 per Heartland Home Services Ltd
 West Clyde
 Brora.



Scale
1:2500

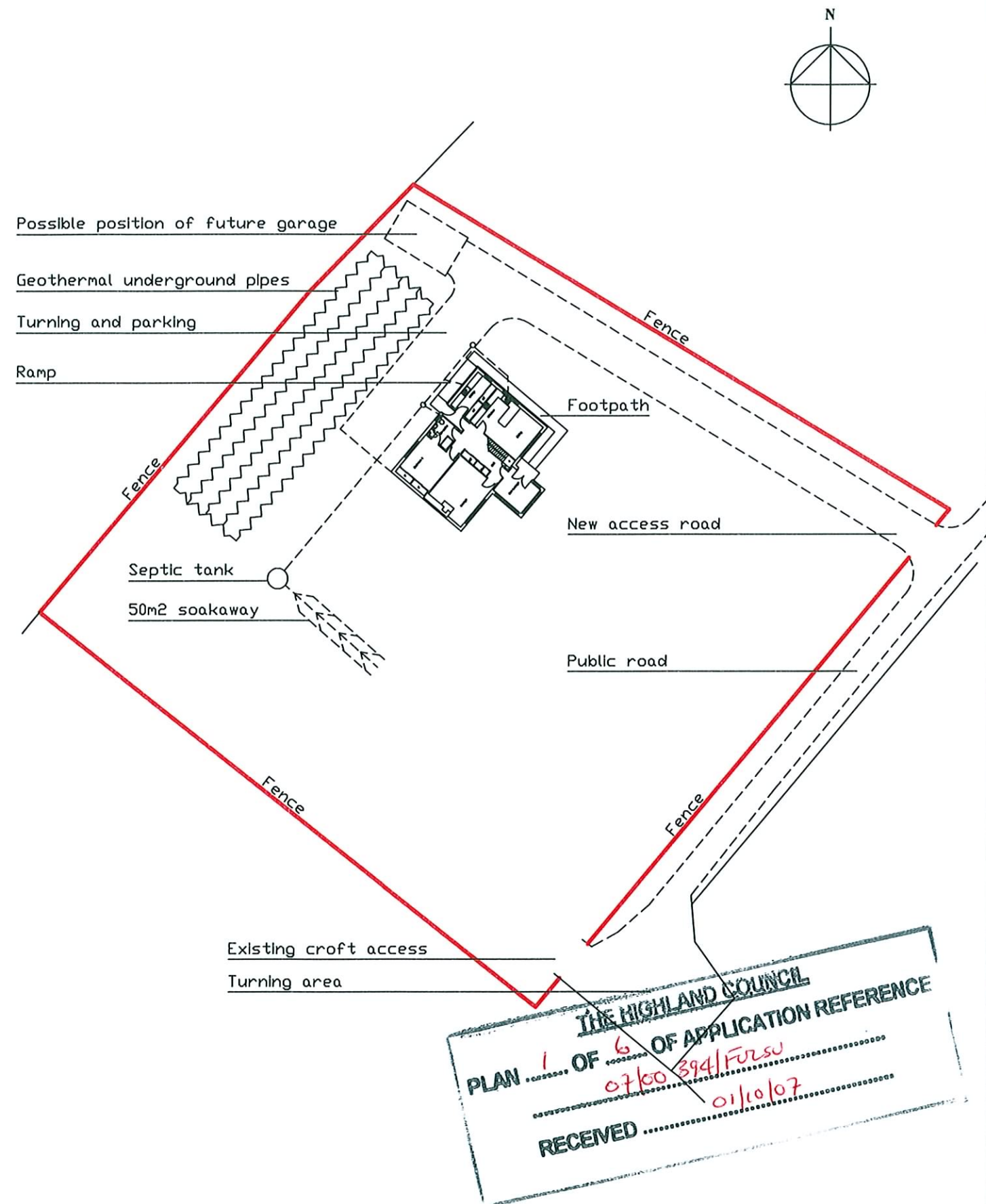
Date: 10 December 2007

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DETAILS Location Plan

SCALE 1 : 2500



Existingcroft access
Turning area

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL
 PLAN 1 OF 6 OF APPLICATION REFERENCE
 07/00 394/Forsu
 RECEIVED 01/10/07

Heartland Home Services Ltd
 West Clyne, Brora. KW9 6NH. Tel 01408 621617 - Fax. 01408 621162

CLIENT Miss J Dunn

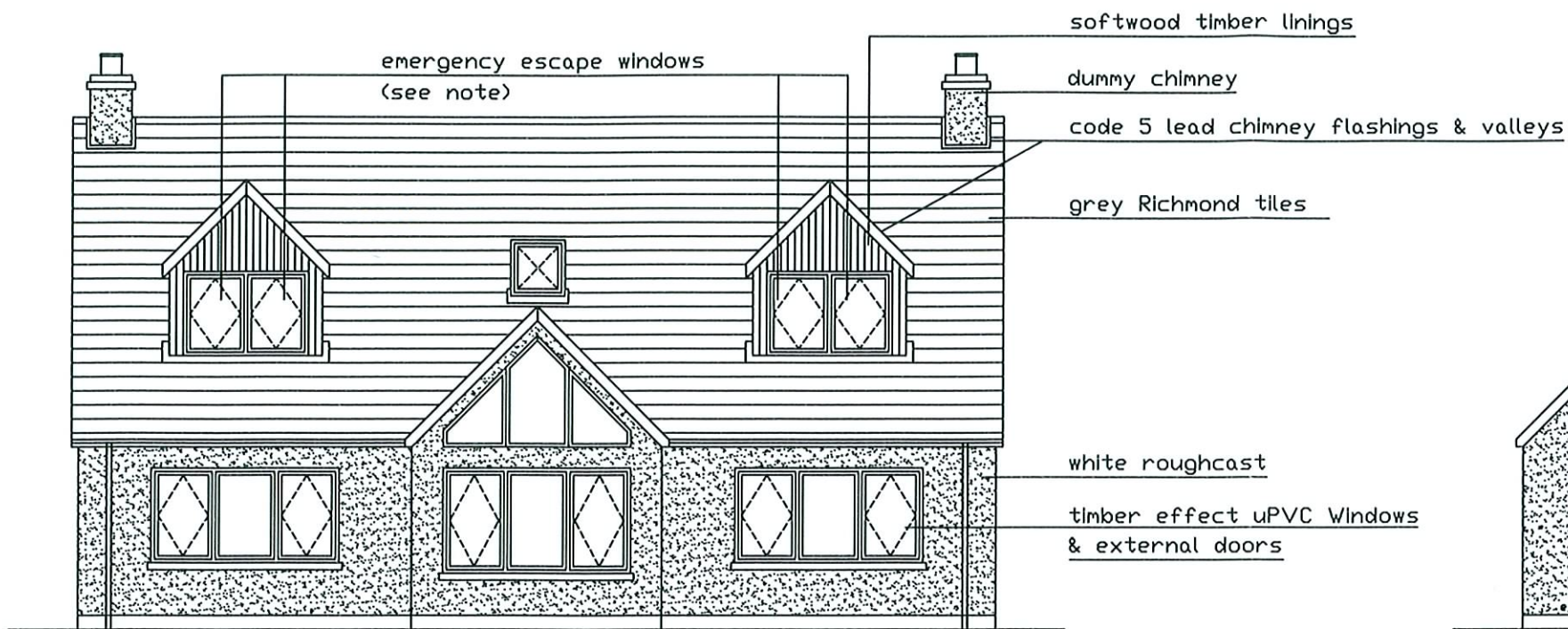
DESCRIPTION Proposed New Dwelling at Ardachu, Brora

REF_NO 1605-Rev 'A'

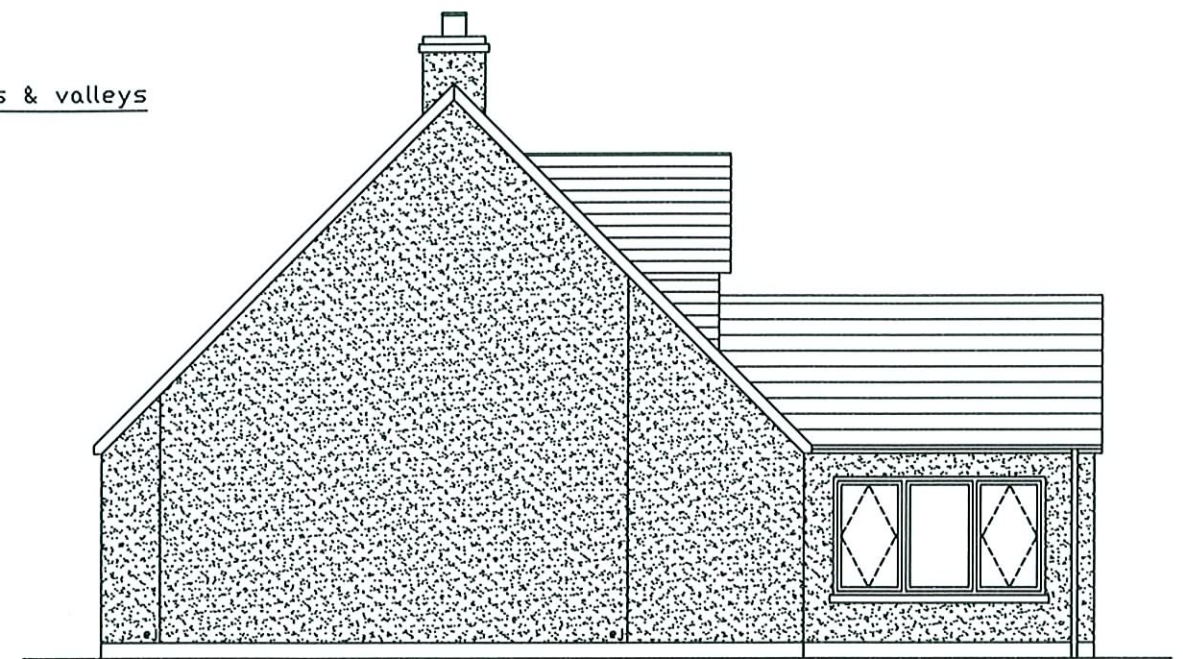
DETAILS Block Plan

SCALE 1 : 500

DATE 08-03-2007

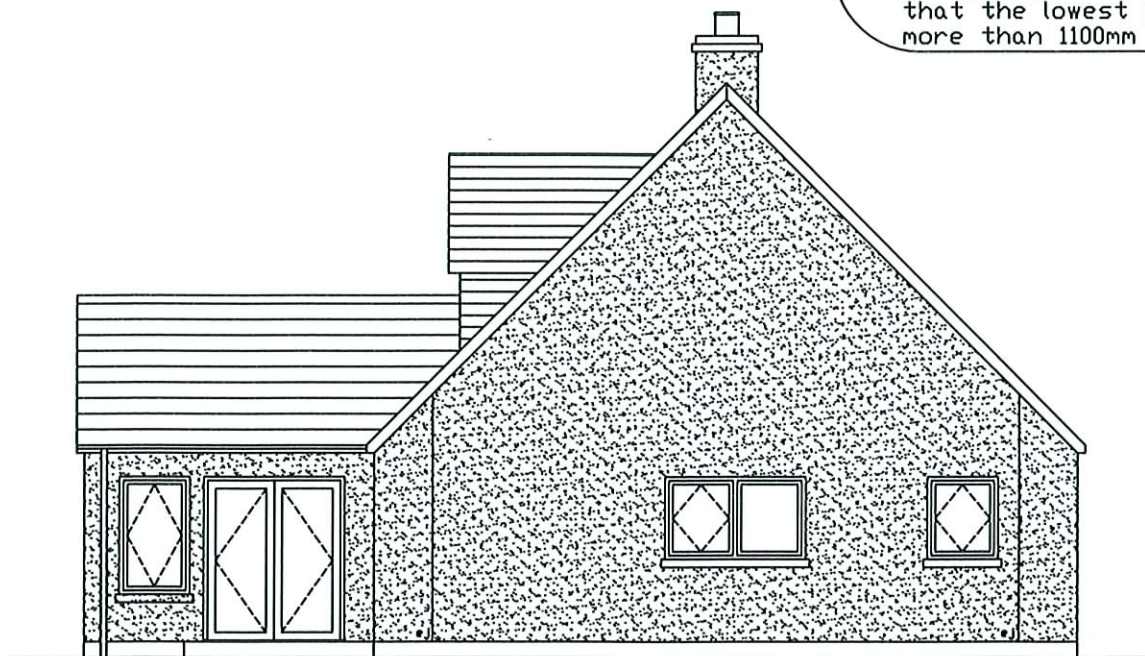


Front Elevation

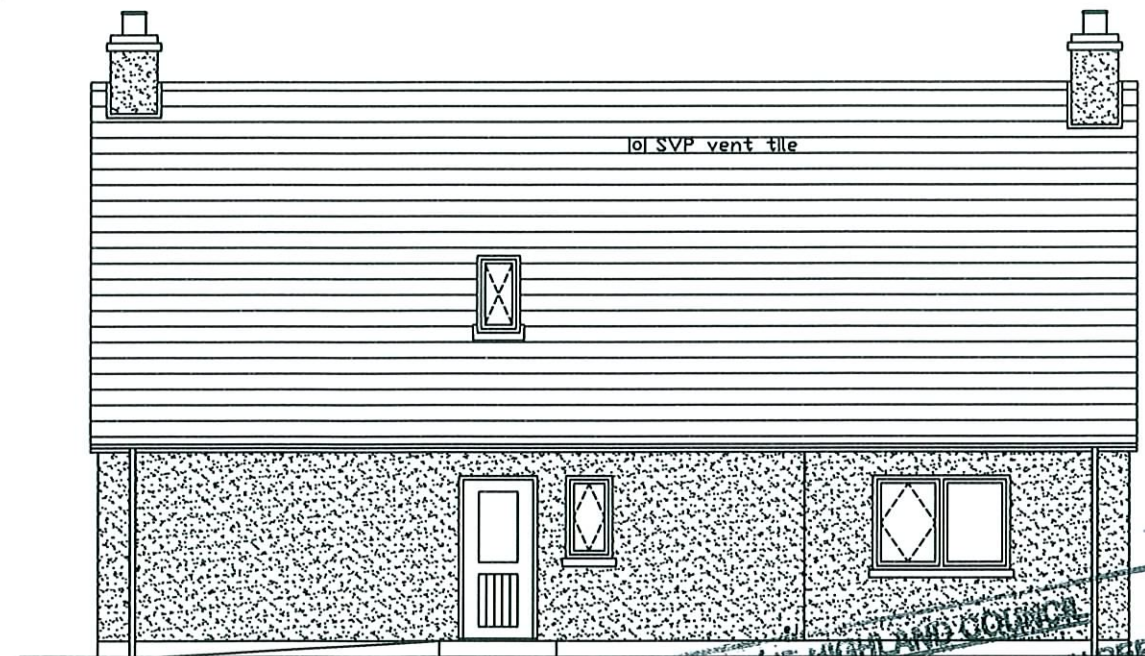


Side Elevation

Note:
 All windows to be openable and able to be cleaned from inside.
 Emergency escape windows to be fitted so that the lowest part of opening is not more than 1100mm above finished floor level.



Side Elevation



Rear Elevation

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL
 PLAN 4 OF 6 OF APPLICATION REFERENCE
 07603941 Fusu
 01/10/07
 RECEIVED

Heartland Home Services Ltd
 West Clyne, Brora. KW9 6NH. Tel 01408 621617 - Fax. 01408 621162

CLIENT Miss J Dunn

DESCRIPTION Proposed New Dwelling at 397 East Brora.

REF_NO 1605-Rev 'G'

DETAILS Elevations

SCALE 1 : 100

DATE 11-08-2006