

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

CAITHNESS, SUTHERLAND & EASTER ROSS PLANNING
APPLICATIONS AND REVIEW COMMITTEE – 15 July 2008

Agenda Item	2.5
Report No	37/08

08/00133/FULCA - Erection of one block 4No. flatted apartments and erection of one 1¾ storey house at former funeral parlour, Rose Street, Thurso.

Report by Area Planning and Building Standards Manager

SUMMARY

The application is in detail for the erection of one block of four flats and a single 1¾ storey house at the former funeral parlour at Rose Street, Thurso. The site lies within the Thurso Conservation Area.

Members may recall consideration of an application to demolish the former funeral parlour (07/00049/CONCA) at the 18 December 2007 Committee. A copy of this application is attached to the end of the report for reference. Committee previously expressed concern that if approval was given to demolish the building the site might not be developed for some considerable time and would become a waste ground to the detriment of the Conservation Area. Members also expressed reservations in relation to the developer's indicative proposals for a flatted development to replace the existing building, stating that it was not in keeping with the surrounding area.

Following further discussion the Committee AGREED that the application be deferred and the applicant advised that while Members were minded to grant permission for the demolition of the building, determination of the application would be subject to the prior submission of a planning application containing proposals for re-development of the site.

The applicant has now submitted a detailed proposal for the re-development of the site.

The Recommendation is to GRANT planning permission for (1) the erection of the flats and house (08/00133/FULCA), and (2) the demolition of the funeral parlour (07/00049/CONCA).

Ward Number 2 – Thurso

Applicant – J Begg Building Contractors

No hearing is required.

1. PROPOSAL

- 1.1 The application is in detail for the erection of a block of 4 flats and a single 1¾ storey house at the former funeral parlour site at Rose Street. The existing building is not listed, but does lie within the Thurso Conservation Area.
- 1.2 The site is within a residential part of the town, and as such a residential use would reasonably be expected on the site. There is a considerable variation in the sizes and types of houses surrounding the site and this helps to form the character of the Rose Street and Cowie Lane streetscape. The houses have variable depths of frontage from the streets, with some set back with gardens to the front, such as the adjacent houses to the site on Cowie Lane and Rose Street, whilst others are positioned right up against the pavement edges, as on the east side of Rose Street. There is also a mix of external finishes, with stone and harled walls, with slate roofs. A more modern house is found diagonally across Rose Street from the site.
- 1.3 The overall development proposal comprises the demolition of the existing single storey former funeral parlour, with its replacement by a block of four flats and a single house.
- 1.4 The flats are contained within a building facing onto Cowie Lane, with the proposed 2½ storey building abutting the pavement. The building measures 13.7m x 10m x 9.5m. There is a communal entrance hall leading to 2No. 1 bedroom ground floor flats, and a communal stairway to the first floor. The 2No. flats on the upper floors have 2 bedrooms with an internal stairway in each. There is a gate on the northwest side of the building adjacent to Rosebery House on Cowie Lane leading to a small communal area at the rear measuring 15m x 1.5m.
- 1.5 The 1¾ storey house is on the south-eastern party wall with the 4No. flats and faces onto Rose Street. It is 11.5m x 5.3m x 7m.
- 1.6 The 4No. flats and the house are finished with natural slate roofs and Thurso Orchid roughcast on a Snocrete background. Timber windows with a strong vertical emphasis are proposed together with conservation type roof lights. Skews are detailed on the roof gables, with aluminium rainwater goods. Sandstone detailing is proposed. The existing boundary walls with 1A Rose Street and Rosebery House are to be retained, forming the boundary of the rear courtyard area. The wall would be 2-2.7m high (variance due to the slope of the site).

2. PLANNING HISTORY

- 2.1 07/00049/CONCA – Demolition of former funeral parlour was considered by Committee on 18 December 2007 with determination deferred. Members indicated that while they were minded to grant permission for the demolition of the building, determination of the application should be subject to the prior submission of a planning application containing proposals for re-development of the site.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

3.1 Representations have been received from four different addresses and relate to the following matters:

- Hydrangea on wall at Rosebery House to be properly cut at appropriate height and not ripped off the wall
- Coping provided along the top of wall – Caithness slab
- Sheeting provided at base of wall to stop material falling onto garden
- Proposal not in keeping with area
- No off street parking
- Over-development of site
- Loss of privacy
- Loss of light due to height of building
- Visual appearance
- No green space / garden
- Two town houses or 1½ storey flats with off street parking more appropriate
- Release of asbestos, dust and noise from demolition works

3.2 The letters of representation are available in the Area Office and will be available at the Committee meeting. The names of those making representation are listed at the end of this report.

4. CONSULTATIONS

4.1 **Thurso Community Council** – No objections. Concerns over car parking.

4.2 Internal Consultees

TEC Services – No objections. The proposal is likely to require 8 parking spaces 50m in total length outwith the property frontage. No waiting restrictions are in force on the corner Monday to Friday 8am to 6pm. This could create nuisance parking in front of other neighbouring properties.

4.3 External Consultees

Scottish Water – No objections.

5. POLICY

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

Highland Structure Plan:

- G2 Design for Sustainability
- BC5 Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas

Caithness Local Plan

- PP2 – Favours development unless this would significantly affect important local features.
Site lies within the Thurso Conservation Area.
- C – Town Centre - Encourage town centre uses appropriate to the settlement's role in the hierarchy. Protect the character and amenity of established residential areas and encourage additional housing to maintain a mix of activities.
- SP22 – Development in Conservation Area will only be permitted where:
 - It preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the area, or its setting
 - It is of a high standard of design and finish appropriate to the character of the Conservation Area in height, scale, form, material, colour, use and relationship to nearby buildings
 - Redevelopment following demolition is undertaken within an agreed timescale.

- 5.2 The proposal also requires to be assessed against the following relevant Scottish Planning Policies (SPP); National Planning Policy Guidelines (NPPG); and Planning Advice Notes (PAN).
- In this instance, in particular, SPP1 – The Planning System.

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
 - other material issues raised by the objectors
- 6.3 The principle of re-development of the site was confirmed by Committee during consideration of the previous application for the demolition of the former funeral parlour (07/00049/CONCA). The current proposal provides the information which Committee requested detailing how the site could be re-developed.
- 6.4 The design and materials proposed is considered to be acceptable. There are a mix of building sizes and materials in use on neighbouring properties as detailed at paragraph 1.2 and the proposal is judged to protect the character of the Conservation Area in respect of the design and materials proposed as required by SP22 of the Local Plan. The buildings have many of the aspects of traditional form found in the area, with steep roof pitches, cropped eaves, dormer windows, natural slate roofs, chimneys and skew courses.

6.5 The four flats sit adjacent to Rosebery House which is a high building with a ridge height in the region of 13m. In this context, the height of the proposed flats (9.5m) is considered to be acceptable. The house is assessed as fitting well into the streetscape of Rose Street, proportionate in height, massing and scale to other properties on this part of the street.

6.6 In response to the representations that have been raised:

Technical

- No off street parking - TEC Services have no objections to the proposal in relation to access or car parking issues although it is noted that “nuisance” parking may occur due to on-street parking restrictions.
- Release of asbestos, dust and noise from demolition works – These are matters which are controlled through Building Standards, CDM Regulations and wider Health and Safety legislation.

Boundary wall:

- Cutting of the hydrangea; wall coping; sheeting at the base of the wall – the applicants’ agent has indicated that a Method Statement detailing how the alterations will be undertaken is to be provided dealing with the finishes to the wall, down takings/protection. This can be addressed by appropriate conditions. Members will note that the wall is a joint responsibility and is a matter for resolution between the private parties.

Character

- Proposal not in keeping with area; alternative design more appropriate; visual appearance – The design, materials and external appearance of the buildings are considered to be acceptable.
- Loss of privacy – The main windows from the buildings face out towards the road. Those windows which do face towards adjacent properties are bedroom / bathroom / kitchen / lobby / landing. The agent has indicated that overlooking windows on the north-east elevation could have obscure glass fitted as required.
- Loss of light due to height of building – This is unlikely to be an issue except perhaps in the early morning when the sun is at a seasonal low.

6.7 The existing building covers the entire site and is considerably lower than those proposed. It is a commercial building and a future residential use for the site is considered to be more appropriate as the immediate area is now residential in character. Members should recognise that a new commercial use for the existing building, or a redeveloped commercial use of the site, could also bring forward potential issues of traffic, noise and amenity, which are considered to be incompatible with a residential part of the Town Centre.

6.8 Against this, I do have some concerns in relation to amenity space and the level of development (potential over-development of the site). However, flats typically have little outdoor amenity space, particularly in a Town Centre location and therefore I consider that the proposal is acceptable. Members will note that the original indicative concept sketch submitted as part of the demolition application (07/00049/CONCA) had a total of 6 units within a single flatted building. The current proposal has a total of 5 units in the conjoined buildings.

In overall terms, it is considered that the proposal does not over-develop the site and that it demonstrates sensitive siting and high quality design in keeping with local character and the historic and natural environment and in making use of appropriate materials, all as required by Policy G2, and that it also preserves the character of the Conservation Area as required by SP22 of the Local Plan.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The re-development of the site will help to tidy up a now disused commercial building within this residential part of the Town Centre. The use of the site for residential purposes is considered to be a more appropriate use and fits in with the surrounding housing. The proposal is considered to be acceptable and accords with Structure Plan Policies G2 and BC5, and Policy SP22 of the Caithness Local Plan.
- 7.2 In my assessment, the detailed planning application (08/00133/FULCA) described above is of sufficient merit to allow the previously considered, but not yet determined, application for demolition (attached to the rear of this report) to be approved (07/00049/CONCA) for the reasons set out in that report.

RECOMMENDATION

Grant planning permission subject to 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 All drainage arrangements shall be provided to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority in consultation with the Building Standards Authority and Scottish Water.
- Reason: In the interests of amenity and for the avoidance of doubt.
- 3 Prior to the commencement of any development, the developer shall submit a written method statement, for the approval in writing of the Planning Authority, detailing:
- How the boundary walls are to be altered and finished off when the existing building is demolished
 - Protection measures for neighbouring properties, gardens and plants
- For the avoidance of doubt, the wall shall be capped off using Caithness stone copings or similar.
- Reason: As no details have been provided, for the avoidance of doubt and as the site lies within the Thurso Conservation Area.

4 The roofs of the building shall be finished in natural slate.

Reason: In the interests of residential amenity and as the site lies within the Thurso Conservation Area.

5 The external walls of the buildings shall be finished in Thurso Orchid harl on Snocrete background. For the avoidance of doubt, the developer shall provide a sample of the materials for the approval in writing of the Planning Authority prior to the commencement of development.

Reason: In the interests of residential amenity and as the site lies within the Thurso Conservation Area.

6 The windows shall be made from timber and the rooflights shall be from a Conservation range.

Reason: In the interests of residential amenity and as the site lies within the Thurso Conservation Area.

7 The windows to the north east elevation of the flatted building shall be fitted with obscure glass.

Reason: In the interests of residential amenity.

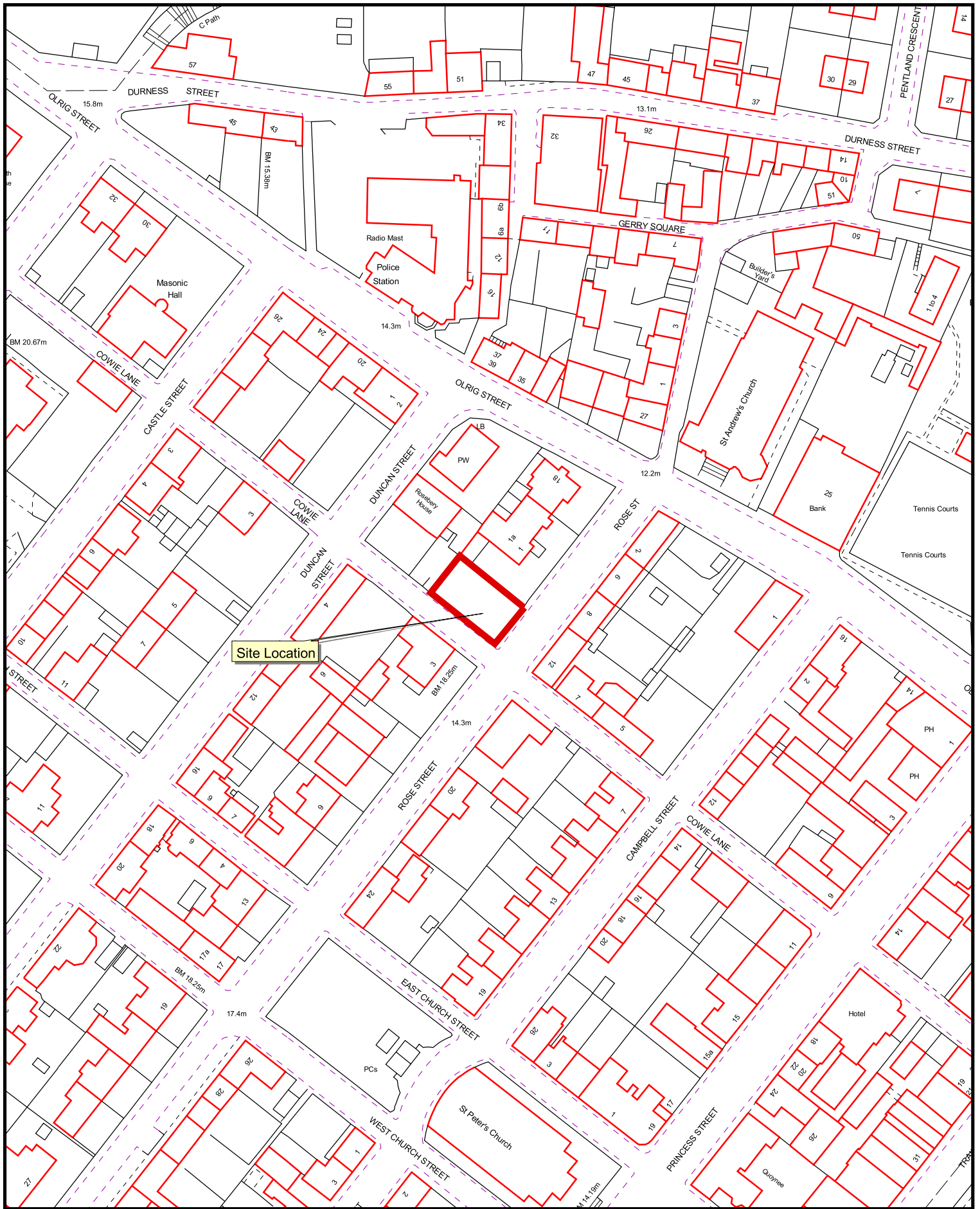
Signature: Allan J Todd

Designation: Area Planning & Building Standards Manager

Bob Robertson 01408 635371

Background Papers: As referred to in the report above and case file reference number 08/00133/FULCA

Date: 2 July 2008



Date: 07 July 2008

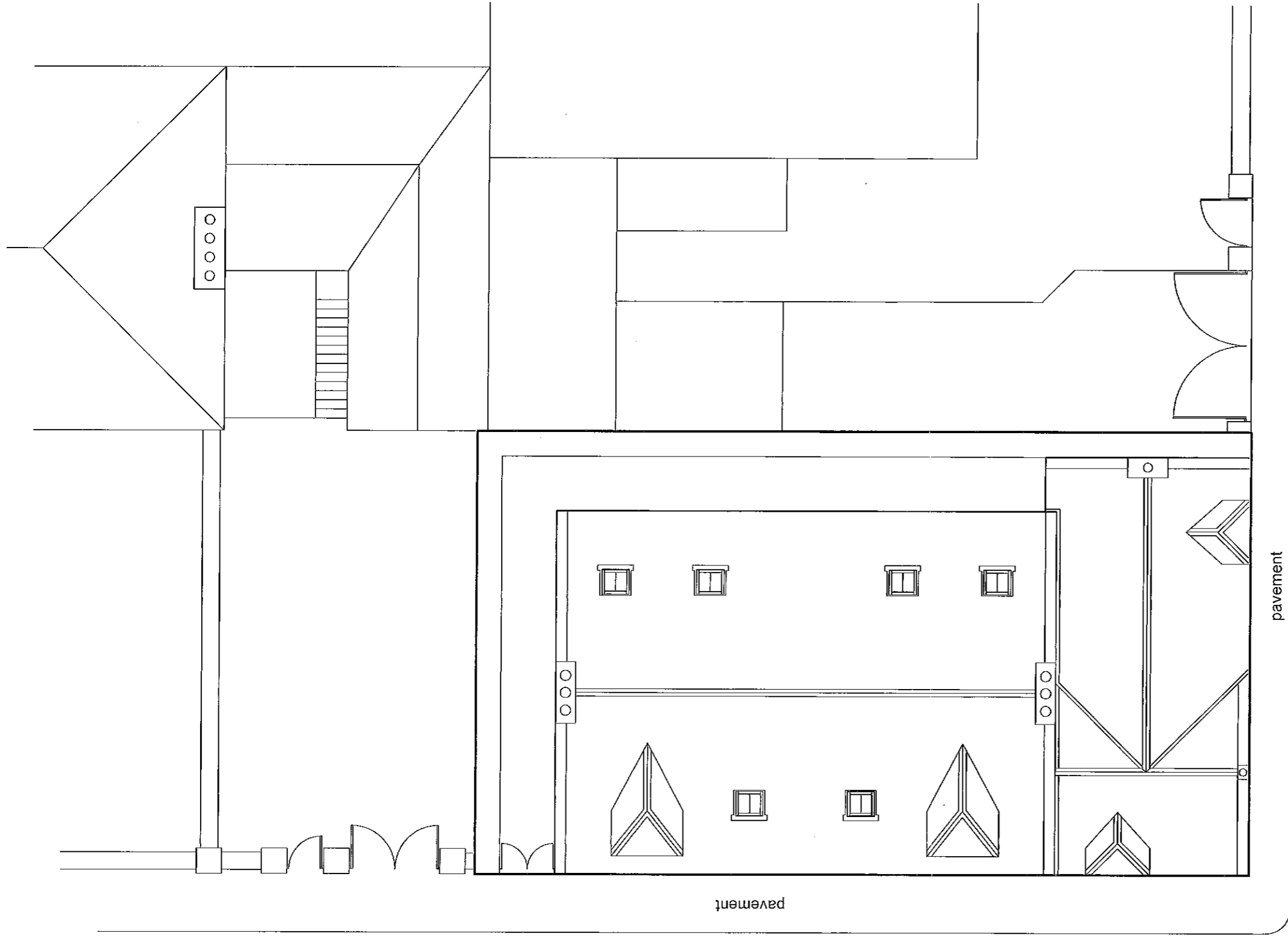
08/00133/FULCA
 Erection of one block 4 no. flatted apartments and erection
 of 1 no. 1 ¾ storey house at Former Funeral Parlour,
 Rose Street, Thurso

SUPPLIED BY THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

J. Begg Building Contractors
 per. Knight And MacDonald Architects
 6 Princes Street
 Thurso
 Caithness
 KW14 7BQ

N
 Scale
1:1250

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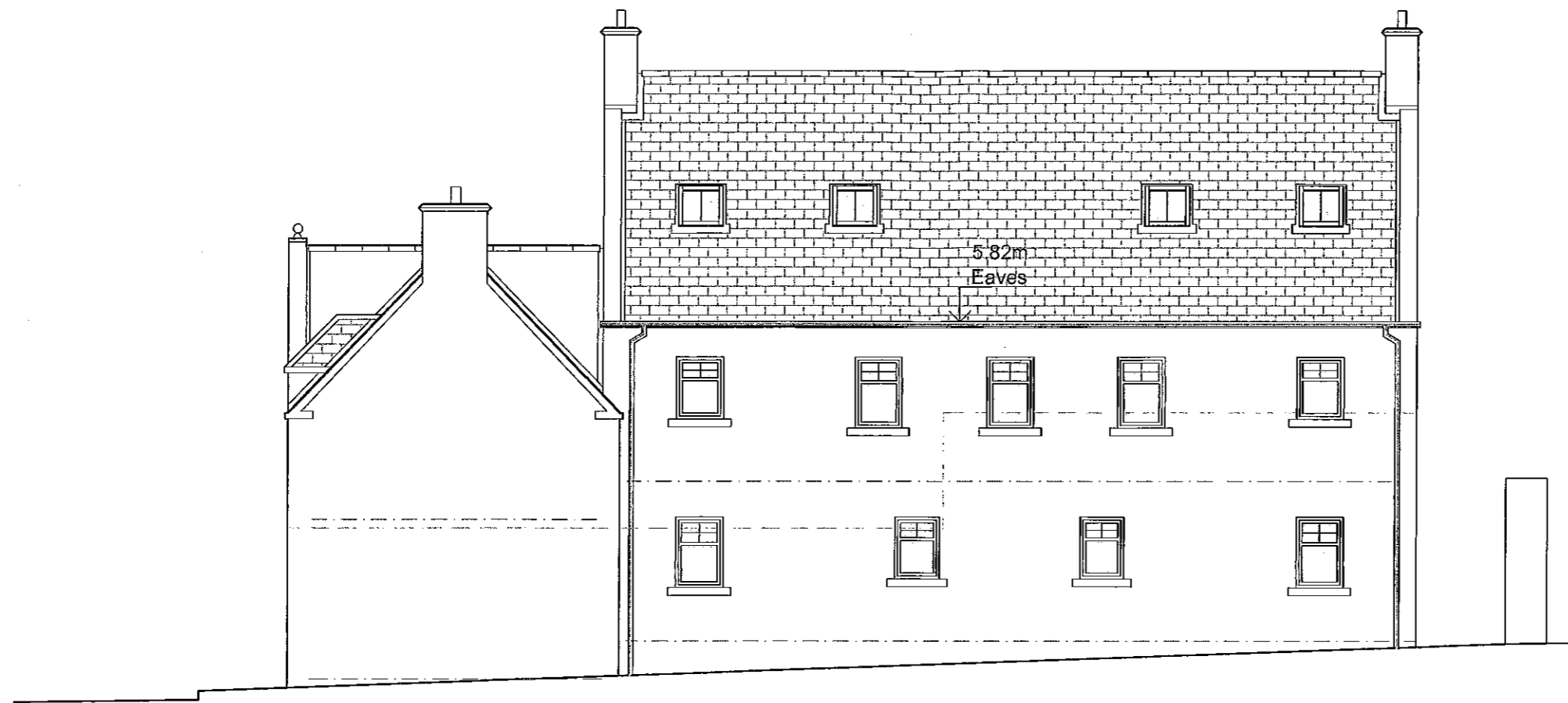
COVIE LANE

pavement

ROSE STREET

RECEIVED
 08/133
 25 100

KNIGHT & McDONALD ARCHITECTS 6 Prirose Street, Thurso, Caithness, KW14 7BC Tel: 01847 898811 Fax: 01847 899462 Email: admin@knightandmcdonald.co.uk			
Project: New Housing at Rose Street, Thurso			
Client: Mr & Mrs Begg			
Dwg Title: Proposed Site Plan			
Scale: 1:125	Date: 05.03.08	Drawn: DM	Checked:
Job No: 16496	Code: AL(0)	Dwg No: 07	Rev:



NORTH EAST ELEVATION



ROSE STREET ELEVATION

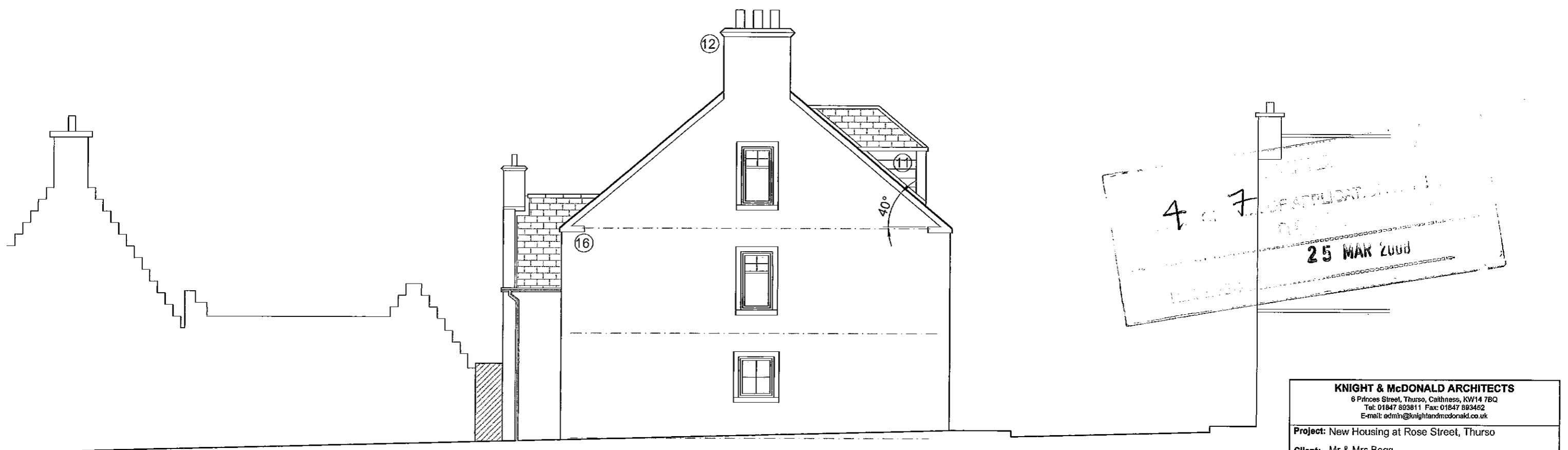
37
 OF APPLICATION
 118/133
 25 MAR 2000

KNIGHT & McDONALD ARCHITECTS 6 Princess Street, Thurso, Caithness, KW14 7BQ Tel: 01847 893811 Fax: 01847 893452 E-mail: admin@knightandmcdonald.co.uk			
Project: New Housing at Rose Street, Thurso			
Client: Mr & Mrs Begg			
Dwg Title: Proposed Elevations 2			
Scale: 1:100	Date: 05.03.08	Drawn: DM	Checked:
Job No: 16496	Code: AL(0)	Dwg No: 05	Rev:



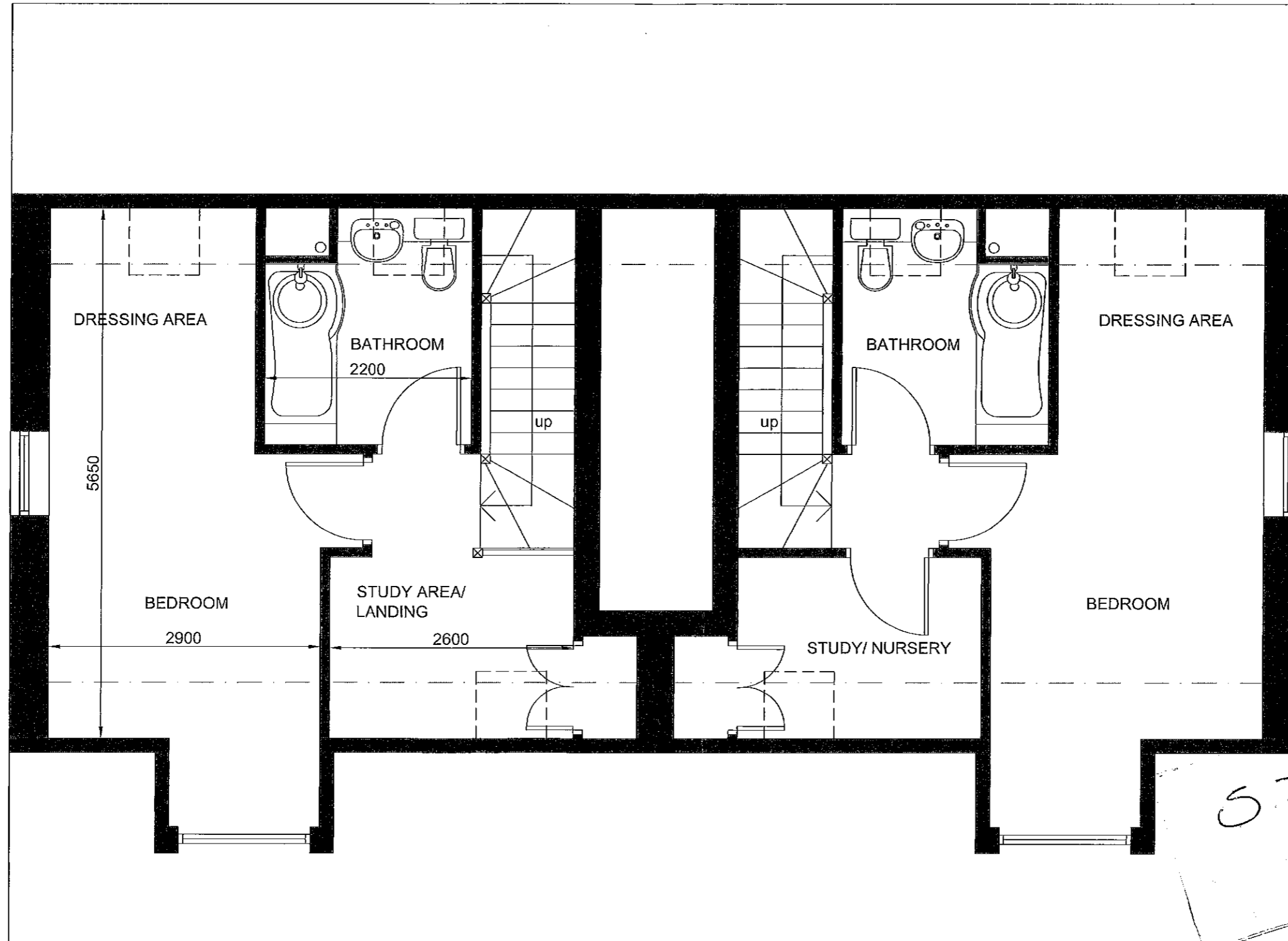
- ① FIRECLAY RIDGE
- ② NATURAL SLATE
- ③ SKEW COURSE
- ④ THURSO ORCHID HARL ON SNOCRETE BACKGROUND
- ⑤ SANDSTONE ARCHITECTURAL MASONRY ON ARCH
- ⑥ SLATE NAME BOARD
- ⑦ TIMBER WINDOWS
- ⑧ STEEL & MESH BALUSTRADE
- ⑨ ALUMINIUM RAINWATER GOODS
- ⑩ LEAD COVERED WOOD ROLLS
- ⑪ VERTICAL NATURAL SLATE
- ⑫ PRECAST MASONRY COPE
- ⑬ CONSERVATION ROOFLIGHTS
- ⑭ SANDSTONE ARCHITECTURAL MASONRY DRESSINGS AROUND OPENINGS
- ⑮ 1.8m HIGH TIMBER GATES
- ⑯ KNEELER BLOCK

COWIE LANE ELEVATION



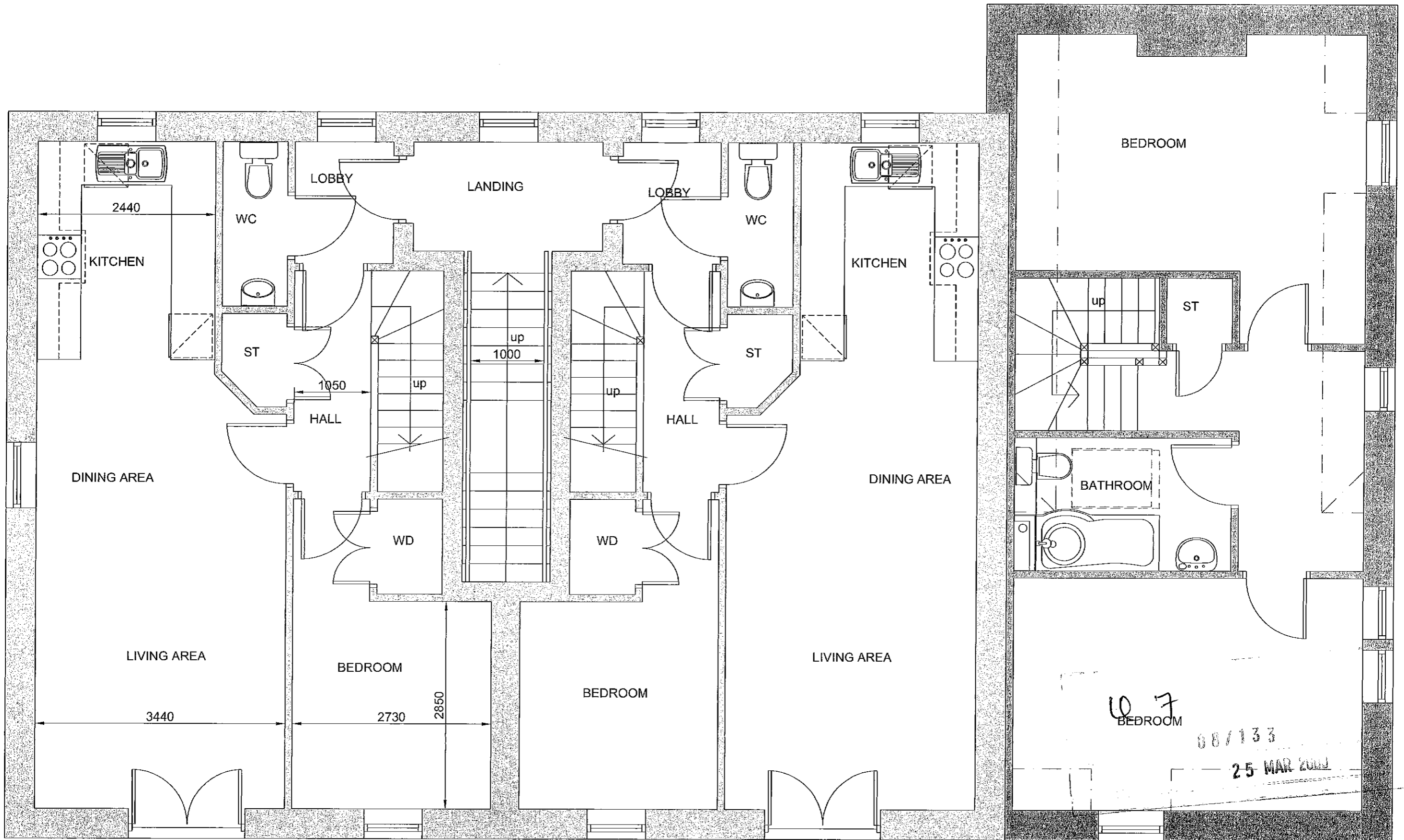
NORTH WEST ELEVATION

KNIGHT & McDONALD ARCHITECTS 6 Princes Street, Thurso, Caithness, KW14 7BQ Tel: 01847 893811 Fax: 01847 893452 E-mail: admin@knightandmcdonald.co.uk			
Project: New Housing at Rose Street, Thurso			
Client: Mr & Mrs Begg			
Dwg Title: Proposed Elevations 1			
Scale: 1:100	Date: 05.03.08	Drawn: DM	Checked:
Job No: 16496	Code: AL(0)	Dwg No: 04	Rev:



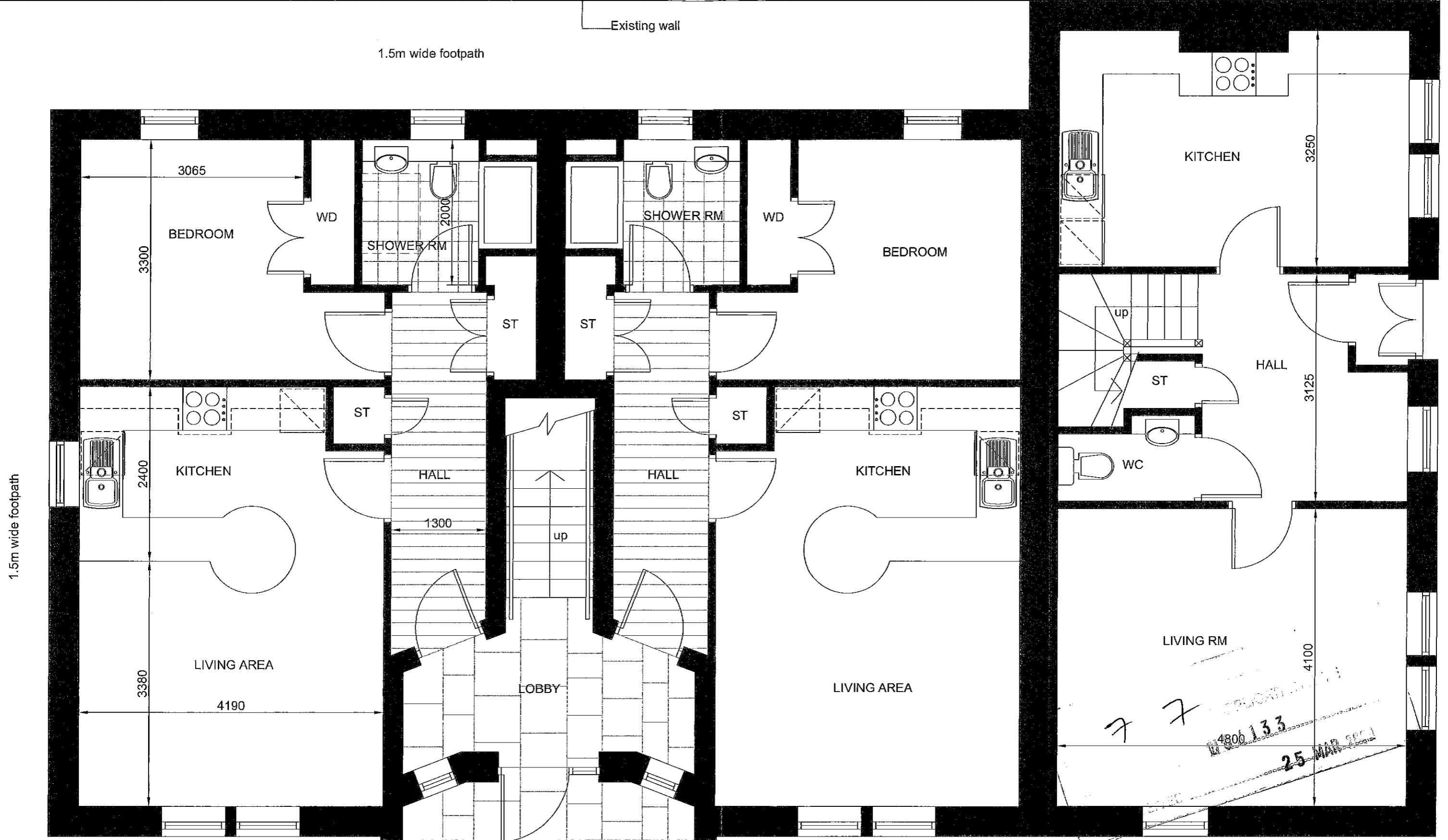
SECOND FLOOR PLAN

KNIGHT & McDONALD ARCHITECTS 6 Princes Street, Thurso, Caithness, KW14 7BQ Tel: 01847 893811 Fax: 01847 893452 E-mail: admin@knightandmcdonald.co.uk			
Project: New Housing at Rose Street, Thurso			
Client: Mr & Mrs Begg			
Dwg Title: Proposed Second Floor Plan			
Scale: 1:50	Date: 05.03.08	Drawn: DM	Checked:
Job No: 16496	Code: AL(0)	Dwg No: 03	Rev:



FIRST FLOOR PLAN

KNIGHT & McDONALD ARCHITECTS 6 Princes Street, Thurso, Caithness, KW14 7BQ Tel: 01847 893811 Fax: 01847 893452 E-mail: admin@knightandmcdonald.co.uk			
Project: New Housing at Rose Street, Thurso			
Client: Mr & Mrs Begg			
Dwg Title: Proposed First Floor Plan			
Scale: 1:50	Date: 05.03.08	Drawn: DM	Checked:
Job No: 16496	Code: AL(0)	Dwg No: 02	Rev:



GROUND FLOOR PLAN

KNIGHT & McDONALD ARCHITECTS 8 Princes Street, Thurso, Caithness, KW14 7BQ Tel: 01847 893811 Fax: 01847 893452 E-mail: admin@knightandmcdonald.co.uk			
Project: New Housing at Rose Street, Thurso			
Client: Mr & Mrs Begg			
Dwg Title: Proposed Ground Floor Plan			
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Job No:	Code:	Dwg No:	Rev:
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THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL
CAITHNESS, SUTHERLAND & EASTER ROSS PLANNING
APPLICATIONS AND REVIEW COMMITTEE
18 DECEMBER 2007

Agenda Item	
Report No	

07/00049/CONCA: Demolition of former funeral parlour at Rose Street, Thurso.

Report by Area Planning and Building Standards Manager

Summary

Application is made for Conservation Area Consent to demolish an unlisted building within a Conservation Area. The building itself has no architectural quality and if removed will be no loss to the character of the Conservation Area. Historic Scotland's Memorandum of Guidance on Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas recommends that the developer should give an indication as to what would replace the demolished building to establish that something can be built on the site which will not detract from the character of the Conservation Area. In this instance the applicant has produced sketch plans showing a possible re-development of the site with a 2½ storey building accommodating six flats. That idea has proved somewhat unpopular with neighbours but it must be realised that this is not an application for the flats – simply for the demolition of the existing building. Any proposal for a replacement building will require a totally separate planning application.

The recommendation is to GRANT Conservation Area Consent to demolish the existing redundant funeral parlour.

Ward Number 2 – Thurso

Applicant: J. Begg, Builders, Millbank Road, Thurso.

1. PROPOSAL

1.1 It is proposed to demolish the existing single storey former funeral parlour at the corner of Rose Street and Cowie Lane in Thurso. The proposal requires Conservation Area Consent because it is an unlisted building in a Conservation Area.

2. PLANNING HISTORY

2.1 None.

3.0 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

3.1 The application was advertised for a 21 day period expiring on 9 March 2007.

3.2 Letters of objection have been received from 12 parties. None of the letters of objection objects to the demolition of the building *per se*, which is what has been applied for. The letters of objection mostly relate to what may be built in its place. However no planning application has been submitted for a replacement building. All that has been provided are some indicative sketches of a proposal which may be submitted in due course. In that respect, those grounds of objection are irrelevant. Some grounds of objection relate to civil matters which are not, again, relevant to the consideration of this application.

4.0 CONSULTATION

4.1 Conservation Architect: No objections.

4.2 Archaeology Unit: No objections.

4.3 Thurso Community Council: No objections subject to there being a time limit for the submission of a future application for the redevelopment of the site.

4.4 Scientific Officer (Contaminated Land): No objections.

5.0 POLICY

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

Highland Structure Plan (2001)

- G2 Design for Sustainability

Caithness Local Plan

- In the Thurso Chapter of the Caithness Local Plan the site lies in a residential area of the Town Centre where the Council will protect and enhance established settled character and amenity. It is also shown to lie within the Thurso Conservation Area.

5.2 The proposal also requires to be assessed against relevant Scottish Planning Policies (SPP); National Planning Policy Guidelines (NPPG); and Planning Advice Notes (PAN). In this instance, in particular, SPP1 – The Planning System.

6.0 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
- Other material issues raised by the objectors.

6.3 The building which is proposed to be demolished is a single storey 'shed' having rendered walls and a corrugated roof. It is devoid of architectural merit and its demolition will not harm the character of the Conservation Area as it makes no positive contribution to that character. Its demolition will, in fact, present an opportunity to design and erect something of aesthetic quality.

6.4 That said, I do not consider that it is necessary to consider proposals to redevelop the site at the present time as demolition of the building will result in an immediate improvement in the character of the Conservation Area. However, I do acknowledge the point raised by the Community Council regarding the need to require the submission of detailed proposals for the site within a reasonable timescale in order to avoid leaving a gap site.

6.5 I therefore recommend that this application be granted subject to an appropriate condition in relation to the submission of detailed proposals.

RECOMMENDATION

Grant Conservation Area Consent subject to the following condition:

1. That within two years of the date of the Conservation Area Consent hereby approved a planning application for the redevelopment of the site shall be submitted to the Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of the character and amenity of the Thurso Conservation Area.

In the event that Committee agrees the recommendation then the application will require to be notified to Scottish Ministers.

Signature:

Designation: Area Planning & Building Standards Manager

Author: Iain Ewart, Team Leader (01955 607751)

Background Papers: As referred to in the report above and case file reference number 07/00049/CONCA

Date: 10 December, 2007

