

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

CAITHNESS, SUTHERLAND & EASTER ROSS PLANNING
APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE – 18 August 2009

Agenda Item	
Report No	

09/00220/OUTRC Erection of two semi-detached houses at
Plot 1, Land to north of Stittenham House, Ardross : Mr Robbie Dunsmore

Report by Area Planning and Building Standards Manager

SUMMARY

Description : The application comprises the erection of a semi-detached block of two houses on an area of scrub land to the west of the detached house of Rinnes and due north of Stittenham House at Stittenham, north of Ardross.

Recommendation : **GRANT** planning permission in principle

Ward : 7 - Cromarty Firth

Development Category : Local

Pre-determination hearing : Not required

Reason not delegated : Five objections

1. PROPOSAL

1.1 The application for planning permission in principle proposes two semi-detached houses on an area of scrub land lying between Stittenham House and the main group of houses at Stittenham, approximately one kilometre north of Ardross crossroads to the west of the B9176 public road. An access has already been formed into the site from the public road.

1.2 The site is framed to the north and east by the existing houses of Highfield, Melrose and Rinnes. Those properties are detached houses set within generous plots. Existing mature trees exist along the mutual boundaries with those properties. To the west is forested land owned by the Forestry Commission and to the south is an area of mixed woodland and a second house plot which has a detailed permission for a single house sharing the access onto the public road.

2. PLANNING HISTORY

2.1 04/01071/OUTRC Erection of two houses – Outline Planning Permission granted 11.02.2005.

06/00223/REMRC Formation of access road and services to serve two houses – Approval of Reserved Matters 27.03.2006.

07/00899/FULRC Erection of house on Plot 1 – Planning Permission granted 09.01.2008.

08/00734/FULRC Erection of house on Plot 2 – Planning Permission granted 05.02.2009.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

3.1 Five letters of objection have been received. The following material planning issues have been raised by objectors :

- The original permission was for a single house; this application will double the number of properties and increase traffic running past adjoining properties with implications on noise/disturbance to adjoining properties.
- Semi-detached houses will not be in keeping with any of the surrounding detached properties and thereby not in accordance with the Natural/Heritage policies in the adopted Local Plan.
- The proposed location/orientation of the houses will affect privacy of adjoining properties.
- Concern over proximity of two septic tanks and soakaways to adjoining properties particularly in an area susceptible to flooding.
- Concern over two oil or gas tanks close by adjoining properties which would be unsightly.
- Increase in traffic emerging onto public road will increase the potential for accidents given close proximity of access to adjoining property and blind bend to south given high volume of traffic, with significant heavy traffic.
- Concern that approval will result in the felling of significant mature trees, thereby removing present amenity screening between the sites.
- Questionmark over site boundary to north.
- Services put in to this plot are based on a single house and intensification of this would require access re-excavated.

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 **Ardross Community Council** : No objection in principle. Smaller houses are to be encouraged within Ardross to broaden the spectrum of the housing stock. There are concerns over the size of the accommodation. It is requested that the applicant's statement that the total internal floorspace (of each house) will be no greater than 100m² should be enforced as a condition. This would go some way to alleviating concerns over access onto the public road. It is also suggested that provision is made for a passing place on the access road.

4.2 Internal Consultees

TECS (Transport) : No objection subject to conditions attached previously. The sightline to the south is only 110m and work is necessary to open it up to 135m.

Archaeology Unit : The archaeological concerns at this location were addressed by an archaeological evaluation undertaken in February 2006. There are no outstanding archaeological issues and development can therefore proceed without any further archaeological mitigation in place.

4.3 External Consultees

Scottish Water : No objection. There are no public sewers in the vicinity of the development. Assynt Water Treatment Works may have capacity to service the proposed development. The water network may be able to supply the new demand.

SEPA : No objection. Although the site falls within the 1 in 200 year flood envelope on the Indicative River and Coastal Flood Map (Scotland), it appears the SEPA map is erroneous and on closer examination it is believed that the site is not likely to be at risk of flooding.

5. POLICY

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

Highland Structure Plan 2001

- G2 Design for Sustainability
- H3 Housing in the Countryside

Ross and Cromarty East Local Plan 2007

- GSP 1 Design and Sustainable Construction
- General Policy 31 : Natural/Heritage Zone. This advises that new houses may be acceptable if they are consistent with General and Housing policies in the Structure Plan; are broadly located within the existing limits of the settlement; can be adequately serviced and do not involve undue public expenditure or infrastructure out of keeping with rural character; and avoid hazards, significant earthworks, prominent siting or conflict with natural and cultural heritage interests.

5.2 The proposal requires to be assessed against the following relevant Scottish Planning Policies (SPP's) and Planning Advice Notes (PANs).

- Scottish Planning Policy
- SPP3 – Planning for Housing
- PAN 72 – Housing in the Countryside

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 Members will note the previous planning history of this area set out at 2.1, which is material to consideration of this application. Outline planning permission was granted by Committee in 2005 for two plots within a larger area of land incorporating the application site. Subsequently Reserved Matters were approved in respect of the access road and services for the two plots. This work has been carried out with the access and service lay-by installed.
- 6.4 This plot (1) was sold on and detailed planning permission was granted for a one and a half storey three bedroom house in January 2008. More recently, in February of this year, detailed planning permission was granted for a two storey four bedroom house on plot 2 adjacent. Development has not yet commenced on this adjoining site.

Policy

- 6.5 The application requires to be considered against Structure Plan Policies G2 and H3 and the adopted Local Plan policy relating to the Natural/Heritage zone. In this respect the principle of development on this site has been accepted by the previous permissions. Outline conditions relating to archaeology and woodland management/tree planting have been carried out in accordance with the sustainability objectives of Policy G2. The applicant's agent has also submitted an indicative layout plan demonstrating how a block of two modest semi-detached houses and associated access road, parking, turning and private foul drainage can be accommodated ensuring good separation from neighbouring properties, thus respecting the established loose knit development pattern at this southern edge of Stittenham.

Servicing and Infrastructure

- 6.6 No technical objections have been submitted by consultees. TECS (Transport) have however asked for visibility splays of 2.5m x 135m, when only approximately 110m southwards exists at present. Those splays were required when Reserved Matters were approved for the access road in 2006 and reiterated in conditions attached to the two detailed planning permissions subsequently granted for the houses on both plots.

Third party representations

- 6.7 As noted at 3.1 above the objections lodged by adjacent householders and landowner relate to the intensification of the site from one house, as originally approved, to two and associated impact on amenity, privacy and traffic. In response to such concerns the applicant's agent points out that the Community Council recognises the need for smaller semi-detached houses. He states that the intention of the application is to provide modest accommodation for two young Ross-shire residents. Further that this is an outline application and design matters of scale, proportion, form, materials will be considered in due course. He is happy for a condition restricting the overall size of the houses. The indicative layout submitted demonstrates the retention of existing trees along the site boundaries and as stated by the applicant's agent the houses can be designed and orientated to create privacy for their occupants as well as for existing householders adjacent.
- 6.8 In terms of road safety, TECS (Transport) raise no concerns over any increased volume of traffic but point out that the visibility splays required in respect of the two house plots as originally approved have not yet been provided to their satisfaction. Furthermore the applicant's agent states that the householders of a large detached house may well generate more traffic movements than two smaller houses.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 From assessment of the above issues, it is not considered that the proposal constitutes a departure from policy. It is further considered that it is possible to address concerns of neighbours by the use of appropriate conditions which will help shape the detailed plans required before any development commences on site. In this respect, it is particularly important that the floorspace and footprint of the building is restricted in size. This will minimise impact on neighbouring properties through ensuring retention of trees and reasonable distance from site boundaries as well as providing sufficient space for private foul drainage systems and for the parking and turning of vehicles within the site curtilage. The proposal is therefore considered acceptable subject to the conditions listed below.

RECOMMENDATION

Grant planning permission in principle subject to conditions:

1. That a further application shall be submitted to the local Planning Authority, together with the requisite detailed plans to include:-
 - a) Plans, sections and elevations of the proposed building, and colour and type of materials to be used externally on walls and roof;
 - b) Detailed layout of the site as a whole, site levels existing and proposed, including provision for car parking, details of accesses and details of all fences, walls and hedges;
 - c) Landscaping proposals including existing trees to be maintained and proposed tree and shrub planting to be carried out.

These are MATTERS SPECIFIED IN CONDITIONS to this planning permission in principle and no work on the site shall commence until the written approval of the Highland Council, as Planning Authority has been given.

Reason: Permission is hereby granted in principle only.

2. Any details pursuant to Condition 1 above shall be based on the indicative layout plan (Drawing number 1160 09 01 Rev A) and shall incorporate the following elements:-
 - the walls shall be finished in a white wet dash render/smooth coursed cement render/natural stone/larch cladding;
 - the roof covering shall be natural slate, smooth dark grey roof tiles or traditional profile sheeting;
 - single storey or 1½ storeys in height;
 - windows with a strong vertical emphasis;
 - traditional "peaked" roof dormers and porches shall be encouraged;
 - predominantly rectangular in shape with traditional gable ends;
 - a maximum of three bedrooms/internal floor area per house of 100m².

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity in order to reflect the vernacular building traditions of the area and to integrate the proposal into its landscape setting.

3. Any details pursuant to Condition 1 above shall include details of a scheme of hard and soft landscaping works. Details of the scheme shall include:
- i) existing and finished ground levels in relation to an identified fixed datum point;
 - ii) existing landscaping features and vegetation to be retained (note – this shall take account of the Woodland Management plan approved under outline planning permission 04/01071/OUTRC);
 - iii) location and design, including materials, of walls, fences and gates;
 - iv) soft and hard landscaping works, including the location, type and size of each individual tree and/or shrub; and
 - v) a programme for completion and subsequent on-going maintenance.

All the hard and soft landscaping works shall be carried out in accordance with the scheme thereby approved. All planting, seeding or turfing as may be comprised in the approved details shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding seasons following the commencement of the development unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Planning Authority.

Any trees or plants which within a period of five years from the completion of the development die for whatever reason, are removed or damaged shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of the same size and species, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure the implementation of a satisfactory scheme of landscaping which will limit the impact of the development on its setting.

4. No development shall commence on site until the existing access onto the B9176 public road has been completed to the written satisfaction of the Planning Authority with visibility splays of 2.5m x 135m provided and maintained in perpetuity in both directions.

Reason: In the interests of road safety.

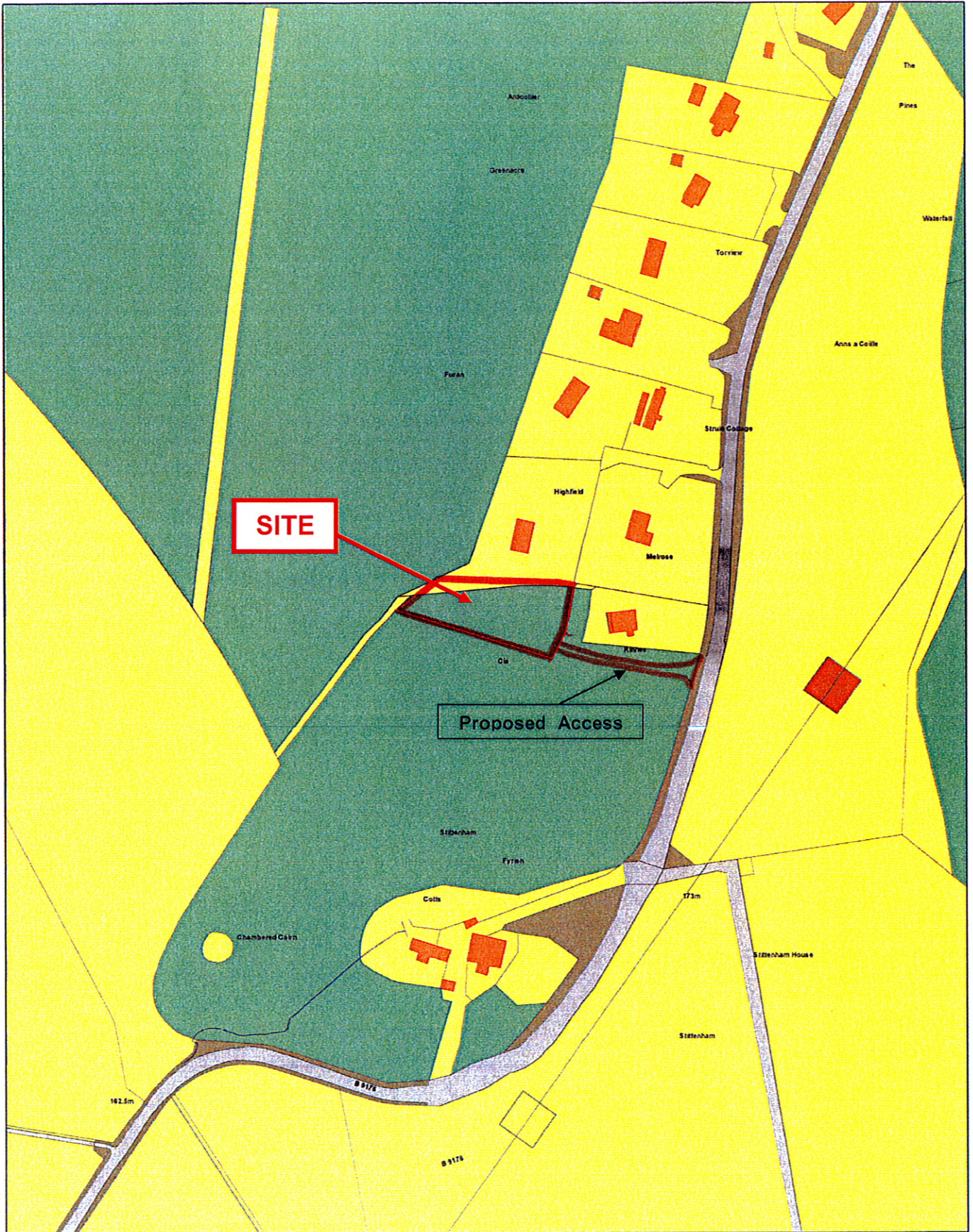
Signature: Allan J Todd

Designation: Area Planning & Building Standards Manager

Author: Dorothy Stott 01349 868426

Background Papers: As referred to in the report above and case file reference number 09/00220/OUTRC

Date: 4 August 2009



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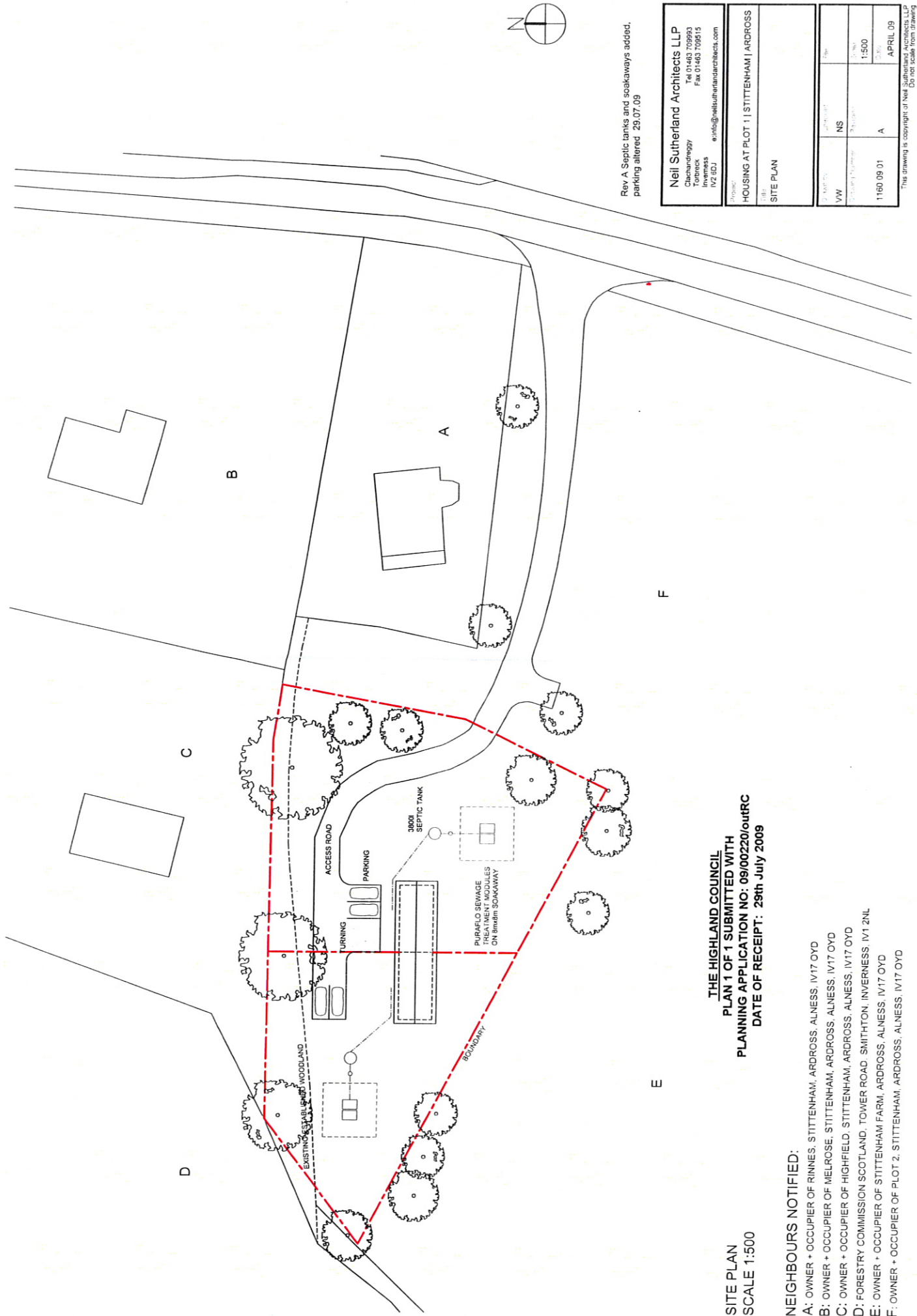


Land to N of Stittenham Hs

09/00220/OUTRC

Scale : 1:2500

Date : 05/08/2009



Rev A Septic tanks and soakways added,
parking altered 29.07.09

Neil Sutherland Architects LLP Clackmannoggy Forreock Inverness IV2 6DJ e: info@neilsutherlandarchitects.com	
Project: HOUSING AT PLOT 1 STITTENHAM ADDRESS	
Title: SITE PLAN	
No. of Sheets: VW	Sheet No. of this Sheet: NS
Drawing No. (Project): 1160 09 01	Drawing No. (Sheet): A
Date: APRIL 09	Scale: 1:500

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THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL
PLAN 1 OF 1 SUBMITTED WITH
PLANNING APPLICATION NO: 09/00220/outRC
DATE OF RECEIPT: 29th July 2009

SITE PLAN
SCALE 1:500

NEIGHBOURS NOTIFIED:

- A: OWNER + OCCUPIER OF RINNES, STITTENHAM, ADDRESS, ALNESS, IV17 0YD
- B: OWNER + OCCUPIER OF MELROSE, STITTENHAM, ADDRESS, ALNESS, IV17 0YD
- C: OWNER + OCCUPIER OF HIGHFIELD, STITTENHAM, ADDRESS, ALNESS, IV17 0YD
- D: FORESTRY COMMISSION SCOTLAND, TOWER ROAD, SMITHTON, INVERNESS, IV1 2NL
- E: OWNER + OCCUPIER OF STITTENHAM FARM, ADDRESS, ALNESS, IV17 0YD
- F: OWNER + OCCUPIER OF PLOT 2, STITTENHAM, ADDRESS, ALNESS, IV17 0YD