

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

CAITHNESS, SUTHERLAND & EASTER ROSS PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE – 10 August 2010

Agenda Item	
Report No	

**10/02384/FUL : Crudie Farms
Land 325m SW of Arabella Car Park, Arabella**

Report by Area Planning and Building Standards Manager

SUMMARY

Description : Erection of potato storage building and weighbridge. Formation of access road and concrete aprons.

Recommendation - GRANT

Ward : 08 - Tain And Easter Ross

Development category : Local

Pre-determination hearing : None

Reason referred to Committee : More than 5 representations (32 - 24 objections, 6 support, 2 neutral) from members of the public residing at, or having their principal place of business at, five or more separate addresses, as per scheme of delegation.

1. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

1.1 The proposal is for the erection of an agricultural building for storing harvested potatoes on agricultural land to the south west of Arabella.

The site measures around 162m x 128m at its maximum. The proposed building is large measuring 84m x 54m x 10.9m. There is a variable roofline with 3 ridges and two valleys helping to break the massing up. The external finishes are composite insulated panels to the walls and roof finished in Juniper Green, with translucent roof lights. There are two large doors - 5m x 5.5m and 4m x 5m - on the south east elevation and one 5m x 5.5m on the north west elevation

Internally, the building has a small mess room and welfare facilities, with the rest of the space being cold storage with a central loading and grading area. A weighbridge is located on the north west side of the building.

Access to the site is taken off the Arabella-Kildary road using an existing but upgraded agricultural field access. There would also be a concrete apron to the north west side of the building.

A catchment swale to deal with surface and roof water drainage is located to the south west of the building adjacent to the Nigg valley drainage canal. A septic tank and land soakaway is to be located to the north west of the building.

The building is to be part screened from Arabella by the provision of an earth bund. Adjacent to this would be a 12,000 gallon cold water tank for fire fighting purposes.

- 1.2 Informal pre-application discussions were carried out by the developer with the Planning Service following difficulties in building a previously approved potato storage building near Kildary.
- 1.3 The developer has submitted a **supporting letter** (received 20 July) which sets out the reasons for the application:

Crudie Farms is an agricultural business, which has been farming in Easter Ross for 12 years. We do not anticipate any changes to our cropping area, which has remained stable for the past 4 years. Any application we make must be for an agricultural building and in 2009 we applied for and have received grant aid from the EU for this potato storage and grading building.

Our present temporary storage building near Fearn which we have used for the past few years, has no cold storage and allows daylight in which causes greening in the stored crop. For this reason we have had to harvest and haul all our crops away from the area to dedicated storage within 48 hours of these crops being harvested. In practice this means that our entire harvest is concentrated into a 6 week period. At present all haulage associated with this movement passes through Arabella in its way south. With the new shed, potatoes will go straight into cold storage and as a result this traffic will be spread over an eight month period and residents in Arabella should find lorry movements drop from around twelve a day to one or two.

Some letters of objection deal with the site itself and we would like to explain that 95% of the work will take place indoors in a quiet environment where we use no chemicals and produce no pollutants. It is our intention to recycle rainwater from the roof area wherever possible, and all surface water from concrete aprons will be held in a swale and only released to the drainage ditch when clean and in a controlled manner. There are some trees around the perimeter of the site and these will remain and we also intend to plant more around the outside to screen the building which will be constructed in an olive green colour similar to The House of Bruar in order for it to blend in with the countryside. It is not our intention to park HGV vehicles, as we do not own any and have no intention to do so. There will be one full time employee based there and 4 to 6 staff employed to sort the crop on daily basis when required. In practice this is likely to average 2 days per week for 8 months of the year. All lorries leaving the shed will turn right along the road to Arabella which has street lighting and a pavement. The size of the building is similar to those found on most modern potato farms through the country.

Crudie has not previously applied to the Crofting Commission in relation this building and if we are granted permission to build it we hope they will allow this part of the croft to be decrofted. It will still leave more than half the croft available for cropping.

We feel that over the last 12 years we have brought support to Easter Ross in what have been difficult times for agriculture. Each year we spend £1.5m in the area growing our crops and it is essential that we have specialised storage as recognised by the EU grant to allow us to keep producing salad potatoes in Easter Ross. These Easter Ross grown potatoes are sold in more than half the supermarkets in the UK and this facility will allow us to improve the quality and safeguard the continued production here.

1.4 Adjusted plan with existing trees shown submitted (19 July) PDK093707/1D.

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 The site is a large flat agricultural field. It has trees bordering the main road. The nearest houses are around 200 metres to the north east adjacent to the Arabella crossroads.

3. PLANNING HISTORY

3.1 No previous planning applications on the site.

The applicants have permission for:

09/00516/FULSU - Erection of cold store with grading area for potatoes and implement shed. Improvement / upgrade of existing access with provision of weighbridge. Installation of septic tank and soakaway system at Land 160m NE Of Logie Easter Church, Kildary. Approved 19.01.2010.

Despite the planning approval the applicants have not been able to progress the development of the site further.

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

4.1 Advertised : Neighbours and Schedule 3. Expiry 2 July 2010.

Representation deadline : 2 July 2010

Timeous representations : 24 - 22 objections, 2 neutral

Late representations : 8

4.2 Material considerations raised are summarised as follows:

- Size and scale of building are not appropriate to the area
- Road access to the building is unsuitable
- Additional traffic on the roads
- Site is currently agricultural and under crofting tenure
- Introduction of industrial use of the site
- Drainage in area unable to cope
- Increased flood risk
- Alternative locations
- Reduction in property value
- Precedent

- Provide full time jobs
- Sustain long term future for potato growing in Easter Ross
- Potato growing complements growing of arable cereal crops; assists in crop rotation

4.3 All letters of representation can be viewed at the Area Planning Office and for Councillors, will be available for inspection immediately prior to the Committee Meeting.

5. CONSULTATIONS

5.1 **TEC Services** : No objection, subject to the applicant meeting all of the criteria in the attached standard conditions. A 120m sight line must be provided together with an access suitable for larger vehicles. In addition, the applicant is required at their own expense, to relocate the weight limit sign from the Arabella cross-roads, to the south west side of the access to the applicant's proposed development. This must be done, with prior notification to the Roads Authority, by a contractor suitably New Roads & Streetworks accredited.

5.2 **Scottish Water** : No objection. Assynt Water Treatment Works may have capacity to service this proposed development.

5.3 **Kilmuir Easter Community Council** : No comment received.

6. DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICY

The following policies are relevant to the assessment of the application

6.1 Highland Structure Plan 2001

G2 Design for Sustainability

B7 Business development in rural areas

6.2 Ross and Cromarty East Local Plan

BP3 The Council will only approve development if there are no significant adverse effects on heritage, amenity, public health and safety interests.

GSP3 Surface water drainage

7. OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

7.1 Draft Development Plan

Not applicable

7.2 **Highland Council Supplementary Planning Policy Guidance**

Not applicable

7.3 **Scottish Government Planning Policy and Guidance**

Scottish Planning Policy

8. PLANNING APPRAISAL

8.1 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.

8.2 This means that the application requires to be assessed against all policies of the Development Plan relevant to the application, all national and local policy guidance and all other material considerations relevant to the application.

8.3 **Development Plan Policy Assessment**

The proposal is considered to accord with the following aspects of policy G2:

- Service provision
- Contribute to the economic development of the community

The development also accords with the principle of policy B7, albeit it is more significant than 'small scale' in nature.

In addition, under policy G2, the application must be assessed against the impact of the proposal on:

- a) Individual and community residential amenity
- b) Demonstrating sensitive siting in keeping with local character

Regarding (a) the large shed will have an impact on the visual amenity currently enjoyed by residents in the area. The building is large, measuring 84m x 54m x 10.9m and, whilst finished in a dark green paint to reduce the mass, it is difficult to disguise or reduce the bulk of such a building. The applicant has proposed a 3m high bund to the north east (village) side of the building. This bund will help in reducing the height of the building, particularly with planting along the sides and top. Whilst this would take some time to develop, it will in the medium term reduce the impact of the building on both individual and community residential amenity. Furthermore, Members will note that the building would be set back at least 200m from the nearest houses to the north east. This separation will also mean a lesser impact on the visual amenity of the area, particularly that from the existing houses in the village.

In relation to (b), the character of the area, this is agricultural with a relatively open perspective from the village to the south west interspersed by shelter belts of trees in the farmland. There is a general horizontal vista with more occasional vertical features including trees and variously sized farm buildings. The proposed shed will have a significant impact on the local character of the housing at Arabella. However, when taken in the larger and wider context of the area, which is predominantly agricultural, the proposed building is in keeping with this more general character. The building is sensitively sited insofar as it is located at least 200m from the existing houses, not directly adjacent to them. Thus, whilst the building may be out of character with the domestic scale of building found in the village, it is, when considered in the context of the wider agricultural area, very typical of the larger existing agricultural sheds, steadings and larger ancillary buildings found there.

8.4 Material Considerations

Material considerations raised are summarised as follows:

- Size and scale of building are not appropriate to the area – see section 8.3.
- Road access to the building is unsuitable - TEC Services have no objection to the proposal, provided that the access is formed to accommodate larger vehicles, such as HGVs and tractors. The proposed access is onto a straight section of public road with good visibility.
- Additional traffic on the roads – TEC Services have no objection to the proposal, provided that the weight limit signage is re-located to the south west side of the access, thereby forcing heavy vehicles to turn right on exiting the facility.
- Site is currently agricultural and under crofting tenure – The developer will have to secure approval from the Crofters Commission to decroft the land.
- Introduction of industrial use of the site – The proposal is for an agricultural business use of the site.
- Drainage in area unable to cope / flood risk – TEC Services have indicated that the proposal is acceptable. Surface water discharge (roof water and that from the proposed hardstanding) will be directed to a catchment swale before discharge to land and thereafter to the Nigg Valley Drainage Canal.
- Precedent – Each application is assessed on its own individual merits.

8.5 Other Considerations – not material

- Alternative locations – Members have to consider this site only. Any other sites would have to be assessed by separate applications and considered on their own merits.
- Reduction in property value – This is not a material planning consideration.
- Provide full time jobs; sustain long term future for potato growing in Easter Ross – Development of the facility will help to consolidate existing employment in the farming and local haulage sectors.

- Potato growing complements growing of arable cereal crops; assists in crop rotation – The growing of potatoes is an appropriate means of ensuring good farm practice with crop rotation. Development of the site will help to ensure that there is a local cold store facility to cope with the crop.

8.6 Matters to be secured by Section 75 Agreement

None

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 The proposal is for a large potato shed to service the storage and grading requirements of local farmers in the area as set out at section 1.3. It will help to secure this production in the area and as a result will have a positive economic benefit to the farming sector. As a result the proposal accords with specific planning policies.

Against this, there will be an impact on the landscape due to the massing and bulk of the building in particular. This is difficult to mitigate against due to its size, although bunding works and associated planting will help in time to address this. The visual and amenity impact will be localised to the immediate area and when considered in the wider context of the agricultural area, a larger agricultural shed for an agricultural related business may be expected here.

Whilst representations suggest that there may be road access and traffic impacts as a result of the proposal, TEC Services have advised that the proposal is acceptable. Members will note that the local road network, and in particular the B9175 Arabella-Nigg, was upgraded to cope with construction traffic at Nigg. Development of the site will not in my assessment lead to any overall increase in traffic on the local road network – it will only concentrate larger tractors and HGVs in one location, rather than having them coming through the immediate area for loading and grading works elsewhere.

In my overall assessment of the proposal, I would advise Members that the use of the site for an agricultural business use is appropriate and that the development of the site as proposed is acceptable. On this basis, I would recommend approval subject to conditions.

10. RECOMMENDATION

Action required before decision issued	n
Notification to Scottish Ministers	n
Notification to Historic Scotland	n
Conclusion of Section 75 Agreement	n
Revocation of previous permission	n

Subject to the above, it is recommended the application be **Granted** subject to the following conditions:

(1.) The development to which this planning permission relates must commence within THREE YEARS of the date of this decision notice.

Reason: In order to accord with the statutory requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Acts.

(2.) No development shall start on site until the completed Notice of Initiation of Development (NID) form attached to this planning permission/approval of matters has been submitted to and acknowledged by the Planning Authority. From the date of acknowledgement, the Site Notice attached to it shall be posted in a publicly accessible part of the site until the development is completed.

Reason: In order to accord with the statutory requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Acts.

(3.) Upon completion of the development the completed Notice of Completion form attached to this decision notice shall be submitted to the Planning Authority.

Reason: In order to accord with the statutory requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Acts.

(4.) 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 docquetted 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.

(5.) Foul drainage shall be by means of a septic tank and land soakaway or as may otherwise be agreed in writing with the Planning Authority prior to the commencement of development.

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

(6.) The external wall and roof finishes of the building shall be composite insulated panels coloured Juniper Green BS 12B29 (with occasional translucent roof panels), or as may otherwise be agreed in writing with the Planning Authority prior to the commencement of development.

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

(7.) All surface water drainage from the roofs and from any areas of hardstanding shall be directed to a catchment swale, or other suitable engineered SuDS arrangement, to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority in consultation with Building Standards and SEPA.

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

(8.) There shall be no overnight parking, or storage of HGVs, tractors, trailers or other agricultural machinery on the hardstanding areas outside of the building.

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

(9.) All access arrangements shall be provided to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority in consultation with the Roads Authority prior to the first use of the building as a potato store and in accordance with the attached Schedule. For the avoidance of doubt, a 120m sight line must be provided in both directions together with an access suitable for larger vehicles. In addition, the developer shall relocate the weight limit sign from the Arabella cross-roads, to the south west side of the proposed site access. This shall be done with prior notification to the Roads Authority, by a contractor with appropriate New Roads & Streetworks accreditation.

Reason: In the interests of road safety.

(10.) Prior to the first use of the building as a potato store, the developer shall have completed at their expense all hard landscaping and bunding works to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority. Prior to the commencement of development, a fully detailed scheme of landscaping for the site, including a scheme of maintenance, shall be submitted to and require the approval in writing of the Planning Authority. The submitted planting scheme shall have tree planting of full standard trees of species native and appropriate to the area. All planting thereby approved shall be undertaken by the developer in the first planting season following the first use of the building and shall thereafter be maintained in accordance with the approved scheme of maintenance. Any trees and plants which, within a period of five years from the first use of the building die, are removed, or become seriously damaged or diseased, shall be replaced in the immediately following planting season with others of a similar size and species to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of amenity and in order to ensure that the development is adequately screened.

FOOTNOTE TO APPLICANT RELATIVE TO APPLICATION 10/02384/FUL

Please note: Your attention is drawn to the conditions attached to this permission. Any pre-conditions (those requiring certain works, submissions etc. prior to commencement of development) must be fulfilled prior to work starting on site. Failure to meet these conditions may invalidate your permission or result in formal enforcement action.

Flood Risk: It is important to note that the granting of planning permission does not imply there is an unconditional absence of flood risk relating to (of emanating from) the application site. As per Scottish Planning Policy 7: Planning & Flooding, planning permission does not remove the liability position of developers or owners in relation to flood risk.

Road Openings Permit / Road Construction Consent: You may require consent from the Roads Authority prior to the commencement of this development. You are therefore advised to contact them direct to discuss the matter.

Scottish Water: You are advised that a supply and connection to Scottish Water infrastructure is dependent on sufficient spare capacity at the time of the application for connection to Scottish Water. The granting of planning permission does not guarantee a connection. Any enquiries with regards to sewerage connection and/or water supply should be directed to Scottish Water on 0845 601 8855.

Signature: Allan J Todd
Designation: Area Planning & Building Standards Manager
Caithness Sutherland and Easter Ross
Author: Bob Robertson
Background Papers: Documents referred to in report and in case file.
Relevant Plans: Plan 1 – PKD093707/1C A Location Site Plan
Plan 2 – PKD093707/2B Elevations

Appendix – Letters of Representation

OBJECTORS

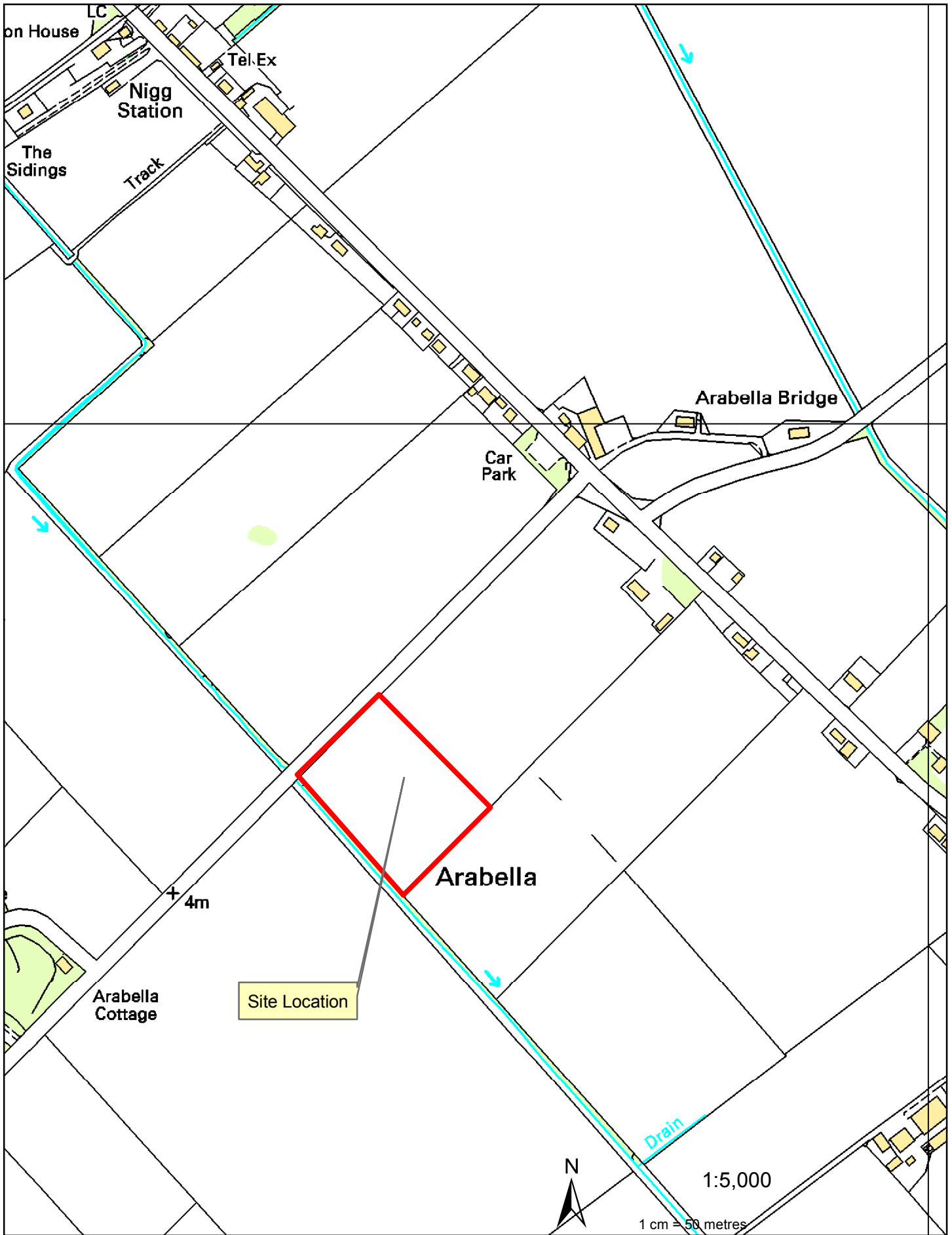
1. Colin and Mary Hayden, Rowantree, 9 Croft, Arabella, Tain, Ross-shire, IV19 1QL 28.06.2010
2. Mr Alastair Fenton, Sandwood House, Arabella, Tain IV19 1QJ 14.07.2010
3. Mr and Mrs E Rose, 7 Arabella, Nigg Station, Tain, Ross-shire, IV19 1QL 29.06.2010
4. Alistair And Melanie Mathers, The Old House, 1 Arabella, Tain, Ross-shire, IV19 1QJ 29.06.2010
5. Mrs Anne Fry, Dalehapple, 20 Arabella, Tain, Ross-shire, IV19 1QJ 29.06.2010
6. Mr and Mrs S & R Cowie, An Grianan, Arabella, IV19 1QH 30.06.2010
7. Mr and Mrs M & A Ross, Sunorra, Alexander Park, Arabella, Tain, IV19 1QG 30.06.2010
8. Alexander Ross, Charlton House, Arabella, Nigg Station, Tain, IV19 1QH 30.06.2010
9. Mr Stuart Sutherland, 8 Arabella, Tain IV19 1QL 08.07.2010
10. Grace Williamson, Newton, Arabella, IV19 1QL 02.07.2010
11. Mr and Mrs G Gray, 24 Arabella, Nigg Station, Tain, IV19 1QJ 30.06.2010
12. Mr and Mrs Hunter Ross, 23 Arabella Holdings, Nigg Station, Tain, IV19 1QJ 01.07.2010
13. Mrs Margaret Morrison, Mo-Dhachaldh, Arabella, Nr Tain, IV19 1QJ 01.07.2010
14. Mr Richard Cross, Lower Pitcalnie, Nigg, Tain, Ross-shire, IV19 1QX 01.07.2010
15. Major R E Harding-Newman, Arabella House, By Tain, Ross-shire, IV19 1QJ 01.07.2010
16. Tracy and Darren Green, 25 Arabella, By Tain, Ross-shire, IV19 1QJ 01.07.2010
17. Mr W R Ross, No 12 Holding, Arabella, Tain, IV19 1QH 01.07.2010
18. Mr William Gray, Donolly Cottage, Arabella, Nigg Station, Tain, IV19 1QH 02.07.2010
19. Lorna Macnab, Crossroads, Arabella, Tain, Ross-shire, IV19 1QH 02.07.2010
20. Ashley Thomson & Gary Ross, Willerby, Alexander Park, Arabella, Tain, IV19 1QG 02.07.2010
21. S Hendry, Maple, Arabella, IV19 1QH 02.07.2010
22. Jo Reade, 28 Arabella, Tain, Ross-shire, IV19 1QJ 02.07.2010
23. Mr Jack Williamson, 28 Arabella, Tain, Ross-shire IV19 1QJ 02.07.2010
24. Mr and Mrs F & J Cuthbert, Pitmarie, 19 Arabella, Tain, Ross-shire IV19 1QL 02.07.2010

SUPPORTERS

1. Jim Ross, H M Ross (Farmers), Lochslin Farm, Fearn, By Tain, IV20 1RT 22.07.2010
2. William Duff, Balnabruach House, Balnabruach, Portmahomack, Tain, IV20 1YN 21.07.2010
3. Edward Mackenzie, Pithogarty House, Pithogarty, Tain, IV19 1PD 22.07.2010
4. Kenneth Mackenzie, Cullisse Partners, Cullisse, Nigg Station, Tain, IV19 1QN 22.07.2010
5. David Houghton, Houghton Farms (Meddat), Meddat Farm, Kildary, Invergordon, IV18 0NN 20.07.2010
6. Graham Burnett, Aldie Farm Partnership, Tain 20.07.2010

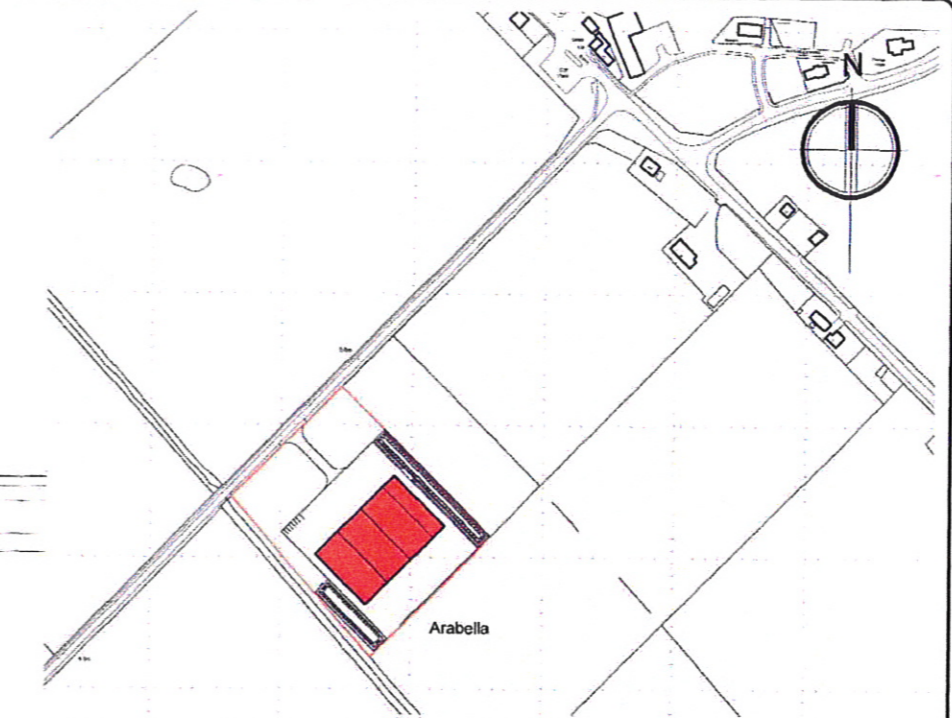
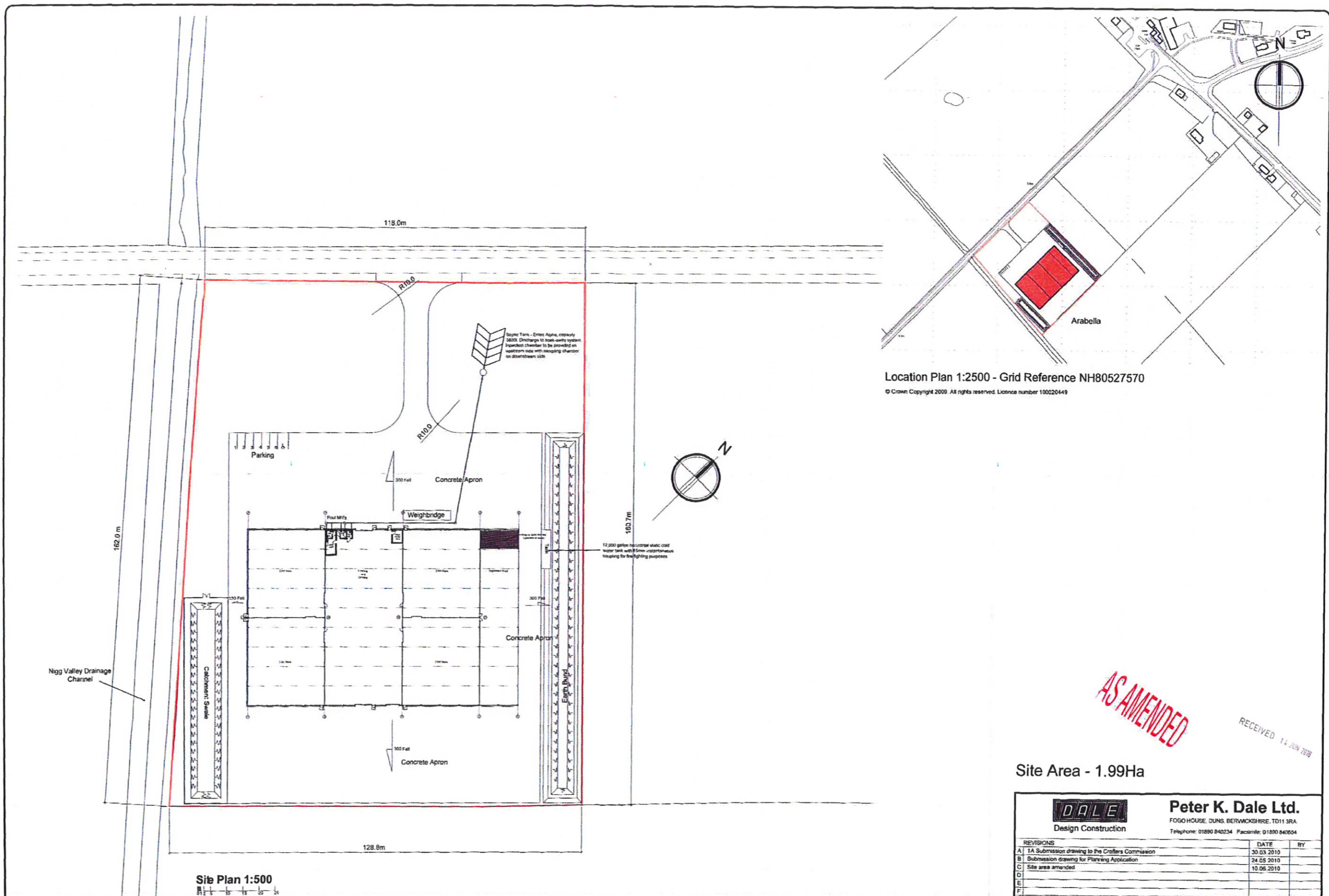
REPRESENTATIONS

1. D George Ross, John A Ross (Rhynie) Ltd, Rhynie Farm, Fearn, Tain, IV20 1TR
22.07.2010
2. Mrs Mary Hayden, Rowantree, , 9,Croft, , Arabella, , Tain , IV19 1QL 28.06.2010



10/02384/FUL
 Erection of potato storage building and weighbridge
 Formation of access road and concrete aprons at
 Land 325m SW of Arabella Car Park, Arabella.

Crudie Farms
 per Peter K Dale Ltd
 Fogo House
 Duns
 Berwickshire
 TD11 3RA



Location Plan 1:2500 - Grid Reference NH80527570
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Site Plan 1:500

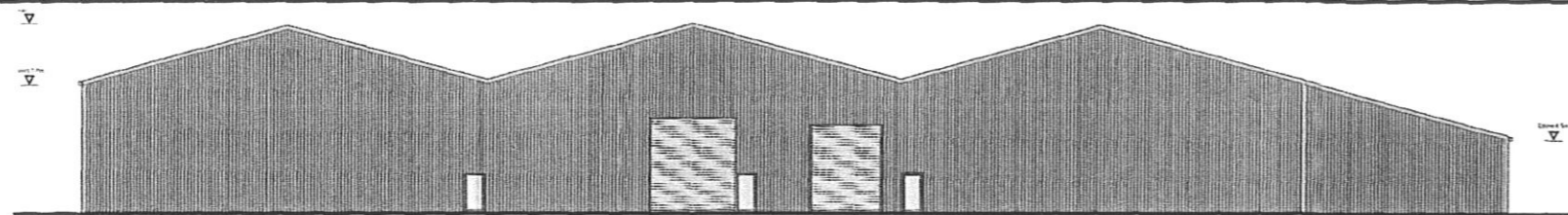
AS AMENDED

RECEIVED 14 JUN 2010

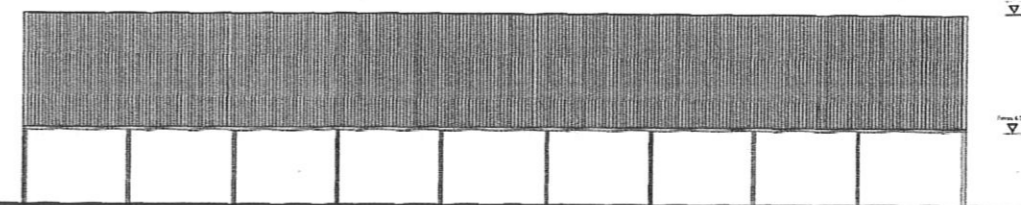
Site Area - 1.99Ha

DALE Design Construction		Peter K. Dale Ltd. FOGO HOUSE, DUNS, BERWICKSHIRE, TD11 3RA Telephone: 01890 840234 Facsimile: 01890 840554	
REVISIONS		DATE	BY
A	1A Submission drawing to the Crofters Commission	30.03.2010	
B	Submission drawing for Planning Application	24.05.2010	
C	Site area amended	10.06.2010	
D			
E			
F			
G			
SCALE	DRAWN BY	REVISIONS	A B C D E F G
1:500	ABW		
	DATE	DRAWING NO.	
	MARCH 2010	PKD093707/1C	

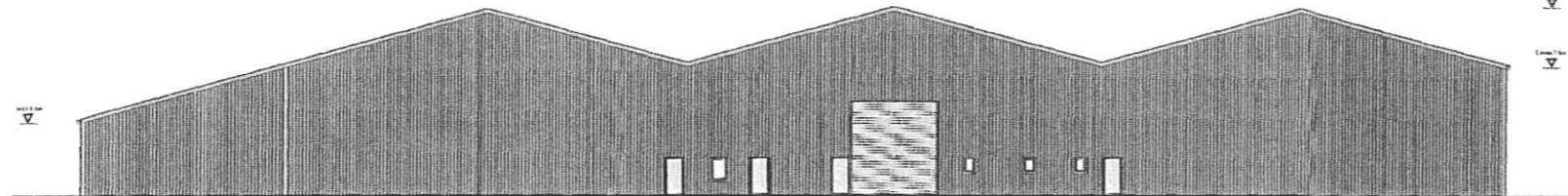
PROPOSED POTATO STORAGE BUILDINGS ON BEHALF OF CRUDIE FARMS AT ARABELLA BY TAIN, IV19 1QL



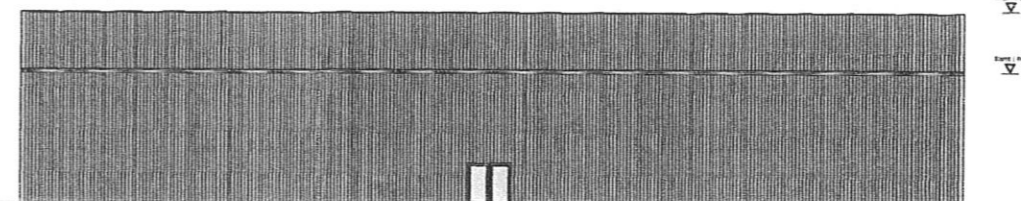
South East Elevation



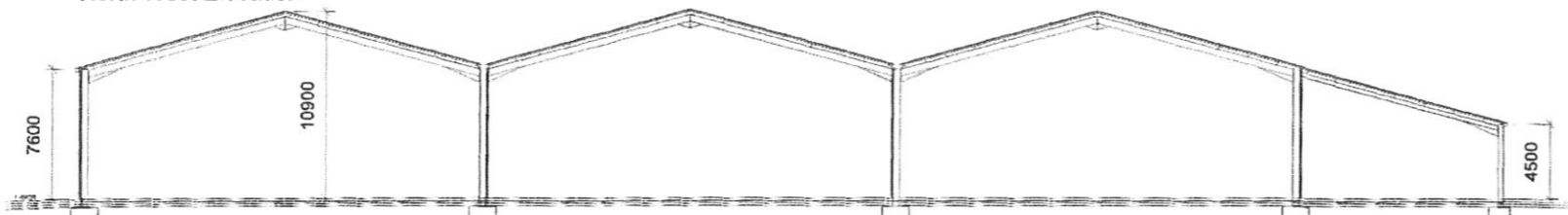
North East Elevation



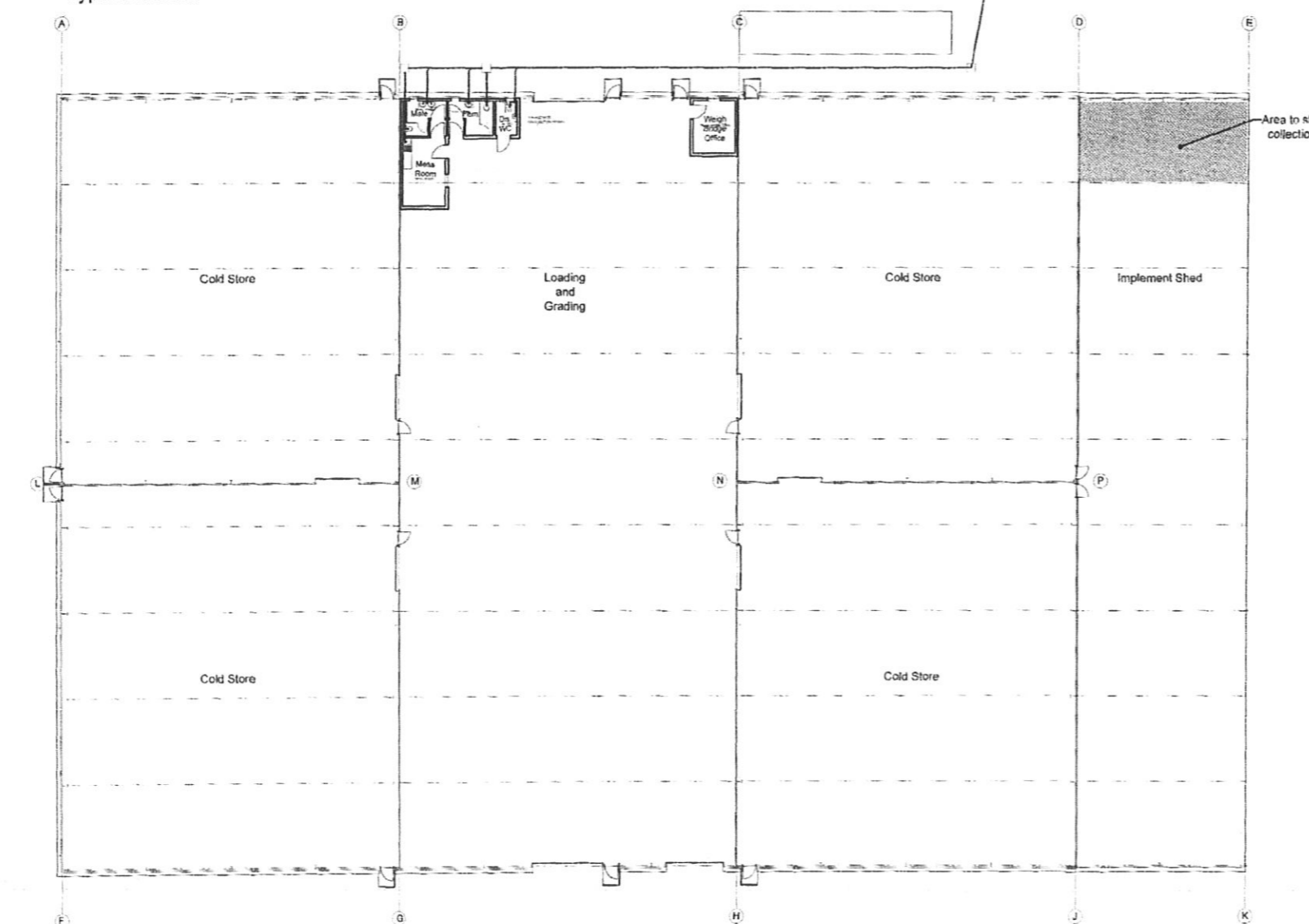
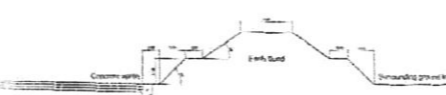
North West Elevation



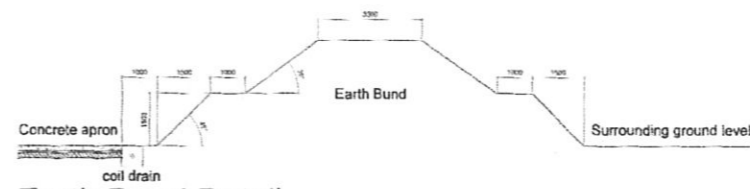
South West Elevation



Typical Section



Area to store and aid collection of waste



Earth Bund Detail
Scale - 1:100

External Finishes:

- Walls: Composite insulated panels, colour Juniper Green BS 12 B 29
- Roof: Composite insulated panels, colour Juniper Green BS 12 B 29 with Translucent roof lights
- Flashings: Plastisol coated flashings colour Juniper Green BS 12 B 29
- Sectional Overhead Doors: Insulated Sectional Overhead Doors, colour Moorland Green BS 12 B 21
- Fire and Access Doors: Insulated Doors, colour Moorland Green BS 12 B 21

DALE Design Construction		Peter K. Dale Ltd. FOOD HOUSE, DUNS, BERWICKSHIRE, TD11 3RA Telephone: 01890 840234 Facsimile: 01890 840554	
REVISIONS		DATE	BY
A	Amended to Client comment	30/11/2009	ER
B	Submission drawing for Planning Application	24/05/2010	ABW
C			
D			
E			
F			
G			
SCALE	DRAWN BY	REVISIONS	A B C D E F G
1:200	ABW		
	DATE	DRAWING No	
	NOVEMBER 2009	PKD093707/2E	

PROPOSED POTATO STORAGE BUILDINGS ON BEHALF OF CRUDIE FARMS AT ARABELLA BY TAIN, IV19 1QL