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| Agenda Item | 4.1       |
| Report No   | PLC015/11 |

10/04309/FUL: Mr David Skea  
Ardmhor 43 Obsdale Road Alness

Report by Area Planning and Building Standards Manager

## SUMMARY

**Description** : Proposed new housing development (8 two-bedroom apartments and associated site works and access.

**Recommendation - GRANT**

**Ward** : 07 – Cromarty Firth

**Development category** : Local development

**Pre-determination hearing** : Not required

**Reason referred to Committee** : Five or more objections

## 1. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 1.1 The application for detailed Planning Permission seeks consent for the erection of two blocks of four two-bedroom apartments on the site of a former house (Ardmhor) on the north side of Obsdale Road in Alness. The original application also included a single detached house however this has now been deleted from the proposals.
- 1.2 A pre-application site meeting was held with the applicant at which time he was advised of the prior notification procedures relating to demolition of the house which previously existed. He was also advised of the issues which would be taken into account in any redevelopment proposals for the site.
- 1.3 It is proposed to adjust the existing access point westwards and form a new access road to serve a vehicle turning and parking area between the two blocks of apartments. Connection to the public water and waste water networks is proposed. A separate SuDS compliant surface water drainage system is proposed within the site.
- 1.4 A Design and Access Statement has been submitted in support of the application.
- 1.5 One variation has been made to the application since its submission. A revised site layout plan was submitted on 2 February 2011, deleting the detached house from the proposals. Revised notification was carried out on 16 February 2011 to all those parties who previously made representation and to Alness Community Council inviting any additional comments.

## **2. SITE DESCRIPTION**

- 2.1 The site is located on the north side of Obsdale Road on the eastern edge of Alness town centre. A two storey art deco house previously occupied the site and was demolished following Prior Notification last year. The site is a regular rectangular shape measuring approximately 35m wide by over 50m deep. It slopes up gradually from the public road to an embankment at the rear which separates the site from the properties on Springfield Terrace to the north. Adjoining uses are predominantly residential although Alness Police Station is situated on the south side of the public road, off-set to the west.

## **3. PLANNING HISTORY**

- 3.1 10/01826/PNO Demolition of sub-standard house – Prior Approval Not Required – notification issued 13.05.2010.

## **4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

- 4.1 Advertised : Schedule 3

Representation deadline : 19.11.2010

Timeous representations : 8

Late representations : 0

- 4.2 Material considerations raised are summarised as follows:

- Development not in keeping with character or development pattern of area to the detriment of established amenity;
- Development would result in significant additional traffic and noise to the detriment of road/pedestrian safety and amenity;
- Green/landscaped space very small in relation to the number of properties involved;
- Proposed materials not in keeping with stone built properties adjacent;
- Concern over impact on trees on boundaries with adjoining properties;
- Impact on sewers and drains which currently are not adequate;
- Nuisance/disturbance during construction period of noise, dust, disruption of movement on Obsdale Road;
- Impact on privacy of adjoining properties.

- 4.3 All letters of representation can be viewed online at [www.highland.gov.uk](http://www.highland.gov.uk) , at the Area Planning Office in Dingwall and for Councillors will be available for inspection immediately prior to the Committee meeting.

## **5. CONSULTATIONS**

- 5.1 **Alness Community Council:** Initial letter from Community Council expressed concerns that the proposals constituted overdevelopment of the site; that the external appearance of the units is poor quality and not sympathetic to the houses adjacent; and that the development would generate more traffic on an already busy road. Further to being consulted on the revised plan reducing the scale of the development by removing the proposed detached house, the Community Council indicated that it was happy with the layout of the apartments but did not like the stairs on the outside as it was felt they cheapened the appearance of the buildings.

- 5.2 **TECS (Transport):** No objections subject to conditions. Visibility splays of 2.5m x 30m required. Car parking adequate. Maintenance agreement required for private road and parking area.
- 5.3 **TECS (Contaminated Land) :** No comment.
- 5.4 **Forestry Officer:** No objections subject to conditions requiring landscape plan and protection of beech tree in neighbouring property.
- 5.5 **Scottish Water:** No objections.

## 6. DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICY

The following policies are relevant to the assessment of the application

### 6.1 Highland Structure Plan 2001

- G1 Conformity with strategy
- G2 Design for sustainability

### 6.2 Ross & Cromarty East Local Plan

- Alness Within area of existing housing.

## 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

There are no policy issues as the site lies within the town boundary of Alness within an area of existing housing, as defined within the adopted Ross & Cromarty East Local Plan.

## 8.4 Servicing

There are no technical objections. A new access will be formed into the site and this has been designed in consultation with TECS (Transport). Visibility splays of 2.5m x 30m can be achieved. 15 car parking spaces are proposed and there is scope for minor adjustment to accommodate one or two disabled parking spaces as required by TECS. Scottish Water has no objections to connection to the Water and Waste Water networks however advises that the developer should discuss the proposal directly with themselves. Surface water drainage is proposed within the site itself however no details have been provided. This can be covered by condition.

## 8.5 Material Considerations

**Siting and Design** - Eight households have submitted representations as detailed at 4 above. In addition Alness Community Council has made two comments. Most of the concerns make reference to the scale and design of the proposals and how they relate to established development adjacent. The applicant amended his proposals to help address such concerns by removing a proposed additional detached house from the north-east corner of the site.

8.6 It is noted that on the north side of Obsdale Road there is a mix of house to plot ratios. This ranges from the more densely situated terraced and semi-detached properties towards the town centre and the smaller detached properties at Lindleybank to the east, to the larger detached properties in large plots between the site and Caplich Road to the west. There is also a mix in house design, materials and height.

8.7 The original single house within this site was two storey and situated centrally within the plot. The proposed redevelopment comprises a two storey block of four apartments facing Obsdale Road in line with the properties on either side; and a similar block off-set to the rear of the plot. The footprint to plot ratio remains low with less than 10% of the site built on and the recessed building line to Obsdale Road is maintained. The design is simple, with traditional characteristics and the wet harl/natural slate finish relates well to materials on traditional properties adjacent. Alness Community Council expresses concern over the external stairs on both gables of both blocks however it is considered that the design of this element, incorporating a small pitched roof over the top of the stair well, helps tie it into the main body of the building appropriately. The agent has suggested that in order to provide a more robust solution the stairs could be supported with rendered pillars rather than any structural steelwork which would require to be clad. It is agreed that this would be more appropriate and can be covered by condition.

8.8 The orientation of the properties, with all windows facing north and south towards Obsdale Road, will ensure that the privacy and amenity of adjoining properties is not materially compromised. Whilst the upper floor windows of the rear block will look towards the rear of properties on Springfield Terrace, there is a good separation distance of over 30m from the nearest of those properties and intervening trees/landscaping within the rear gardens, which will mitigate against any direct overlooking.

- 8.9 **Road Safety** - Another concern expressed is the impact on road and pedestrian safety and the noise associated with intensified use of the site. The development will generate additional activity, both pedestrian and vehicular, however consultation with TECS (Transport) has confirmed no objections. Obsdale Road is one of the principal routes into Alness and has capacity to absorb additional development. The new access proposed will be five metres wide over the first 10m back from the public road to ensure two way traffic can negotiate the junction safely. Dropped kerbs will be formed on either side of the bellmouth and the required visibility splays can be achieved. The site lies close to the town centre in Alness on a relatively busy thoroughfare and it is therefore submitted that the noise and activity associated with the site will not be unusual in such a setting.
- 8.10 **Landscaping** - A further concern highlights the shortfall in open landscaped space in proportion to the number of properties proposed. There are no individual gardens proposed, however a significant proportion of the site is designated as communal landscaped open space. Details submitted for landscaping of this area are very light and as recommended by the Council's Forestry Officer it is important that a detailed landscape plan and maintenance programme is submitted for the approval of the Council, prior to any work commencing on site. The application proposes retention of existing trees around the site boundaries and specifically the forwardmost building line has been set back to ensure retention and protection of the mature copper beech tree situated on the site frontage within the garden of the property of 39/41 Obsdale Road adjacent. Conditions can be attached to cover such issues. This will help ensure that the development can be absorbed more sensitively into the established street scene.
- 8.11 **Construction nuisance** - Whilst there will be acknowledged disturbance during the construction period, conditions can also be attached to cover hours of construction to ensure that such nuisance is minimised.

8.12 **Non-material Considerations**

Several of the objectors have raised the issue of impact of the development on the value of adjoining properties alleging that such value will decrease. Whilst this is not a material planning consideration, there is no evidence to suggest that this allegation is accurate.

8.13 **Matters to be secured by Section 75 Agreement**

Not applicable

**9. CONCLUSION**

- 9.1 It is considered that the proposal for redevelopment of this edge of town centre site, within a substantially residential area, on one of the principal routes into Alness complies with the policies contained within the Council's Development Plan.

Whilst it is acknowledged that the development will introduce change into this area, the layout as modified ensures that the apartments have been sited and designed to minimise impact on adjoining properties and provide a competent and appropriate solution to redeveloping the site, retaining the open landscaped frontage to Obsdale Road. Alness Community Council has confirmed that it now accepts that the layout is acceptable, albeit that it remains concerned over a specific design issue.

A number of conditions are recommended which will help to address many of the concerns raised by neighbouring householders.

The proposal is therefore considered to be acceptable subject to the following conditions.

## 10. RECOMMENDATION

**Action required before decision issued** N

Notification to Scottish Ministers N

Notification to Historic Scotland N

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 and reasons:

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 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. The type of materials to be used in the development hereby approved shall be as specified on the approved plans unless the prior written approval of the Planning Authority is obtained for other materials. For the avoidance of doubt, the roof shall be finished in natural blue/black slate and the walls finished in a white or off-white wet render. For the avoidance of doubt, the external stairs shall be supported by pillars rendered to match the main buildings and not by structural steelwork.

**Reason** : In the interests of safeguarding the established amenity of the area.

5. Prior to any work commencing on site, a detailed Landscape Plan and maintenance programme shall be submitted for the approval of the Planning Authority. All landscaping works thereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with such scheme prior to first occupation of any part of the development. Details of a factoring agreement shall be submitted for the approval of the Planning Authority prior to first occupation of any part of the development to ensure that the future maintenance of the communal landscaped areas is secured. Such factoring agreement shall thereafter be written into the title deeds of each property. A suitably qualified consultant shall be employed to ensure that the landscape plan is implemented to the approved standard. Stages requiring supervision shall be agreed with the Council's Forestry Officer prior to any work commencing on site and completion certificates for each stage shall be submitted for the approval of the Planning Authority.

**Reason :** In the interests of safeguarding the established amenity of the area.

6. Prior to any other work commencing on site, the copper beech tree in the neighbouring property of 39-41 Obsdale Road shall be protected against construction damage using Herras fencing secured to fixed posts and located beyond the Root Protection Area (in accordance with BS5837:2005 Trees in Relation to Construction). Fencing shall be inspected and approved in writing by the Council's Forestry Officer prior to commencement of ground works.

**Reason :** To ensure the protection of retained trees during construction and thereafter.

7. Construction work on site, which creates noise audible at the site boundary shall be restricted to the hours of 8.00am – 6.00pm Mondays to Fridays; 8.00am – 1.00pm Saturdays and not at all on Sundays or public holidays.

**Reason:** In the interests of safeguarding the established residential amenity of adjoining properties.

8. Prior to first occupation of any part of the development, the access into the site from the public road and the communal parking areas shall be formed to the satisfaction of the Roads Authority and this shall include modification to the parking bays to allow for at least one space for disabled drivers. Visibility splays of 2.5m x 30m at the access point onto Obsdale Road shall be provided and maintained in perpetuity to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority. Details of a factoring or maintenance agreement shall be submitted for the approval of the Planning Authority prior to first occupation of any part of the development to ensure that the future maintenance of the road and car parking areas is secured. Such factoring agreement shall thereafter be written into the title deeds of each property.

**Reason:** In the interests of road safety and to safeguard the established amenity of the area.

9. All flats within the development hereby approved shall, at the developer's expense, be fitted with communal satellite dish systems, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Planning Authority.

**Reason:** To ensure that the need for multiple satellite dishes on the flatted properties is negated; in the interests of visual amenity.

10. No development shall commence on site until full details of all surface water drainage provision within the application site, to be SuDS-compliant and designed to Scottish Water's adoptive standards (where necessary), have been submitted to, and approved in writing by the Planning Authority in consultation with SEPA. Thereafter, development shall progress in accordance with these approved details, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Planning Authority.

**Reason:** To ensure that acceptable SuDS infrastructure is provided on site.

## FOOTNOTE TO APPLICANT

**Conditions:** 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.

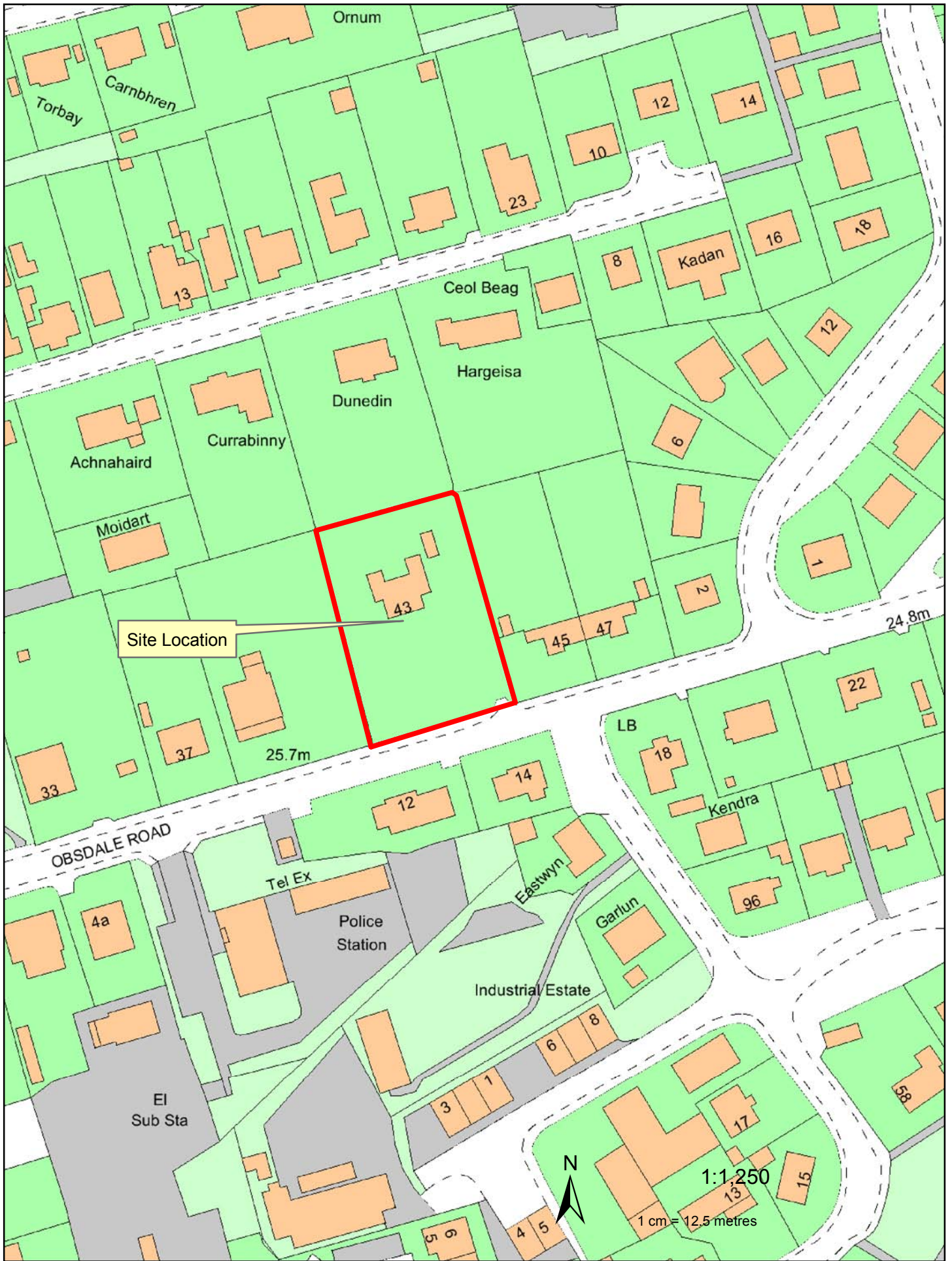
**Road Openings Permit / Road Construction Consent:** you will require consent from the Roads Authority prior to the commencement of this development. You are therefore advised to contact them direct to discuss the matter.

**Street Names:** In line with the Council's Gaelic Language Plan and Policies, you are encouraged to consider the adoption of Gaelic or Gaelic-influenced street names in this development. For further guidance, you may wish to contact the Council's Gaelic Development Manager (01463 724287) or Comunn na Gàidhlig (01463 234138).

**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 0141 355 5511.

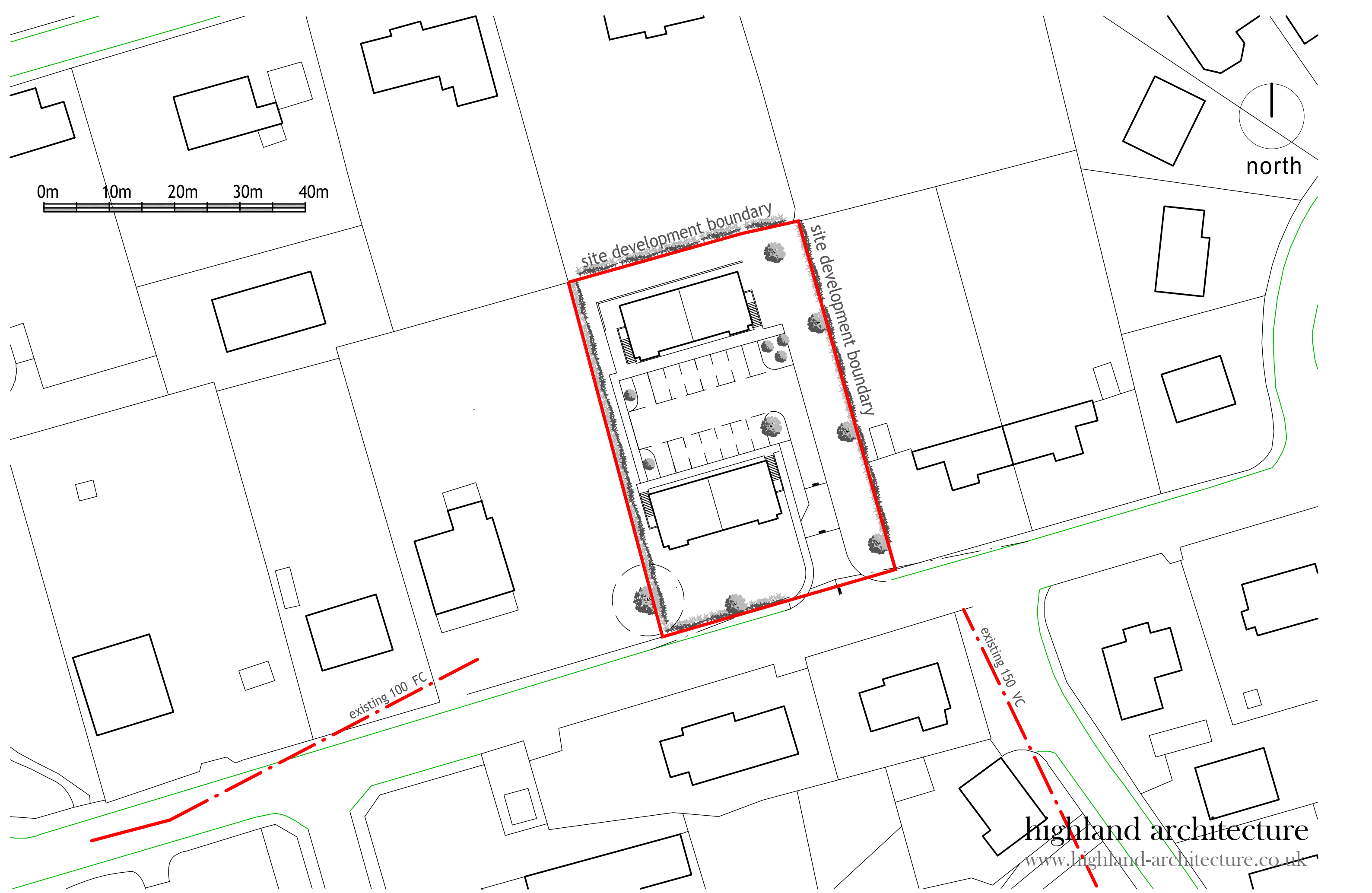
Signature: Allan J Todd  
Designation: Area Planning & Building Standards Manager  
Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross  
Author: Dorothy Stott  
Background Papers: Documents referred to in report and in case file.  
Relevant Plans: Plan 1 - Location Plan  
Plan 2 – Layout Plan  
Plan 3 – Elevations





10/04309/FUL  
 Proposed new housing development, 8 No 2 Bedroomed Apartments,  
 1 No 3 Bedroomed house, associated siteworks, improved road access and  
 SUDS surface water drainage at Ardmhor, 43 Obsdale Road, Alness.

Mr David Skea  
 per Highland Architecture  
 Ross-shire Business Centre  
 1 Castle Street  
 Dingwall



0m 10m 20m 30m 40m

north

site development boundary

site development boundary

existing 100 FC

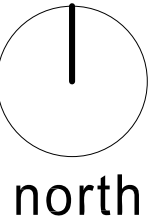
existing 150 VC

Location plan 1:500 Obsdale Road Housing 8 Units.

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www.highland-architecture.co.uk

Ross-shire Business Centre  
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T: 01349 866999 M: 07526 127468

# Obsdale Road Housing 8 Units. Site plan 1:200



- \* 15 Car Parking bays provided
- \* Visibility splays to be provided 2.5x30m

project  
Proposed Housing Development  
Obsdale Road Alness for D Skea

drawing Proposed Site Plan  
scale 1:200 date Jan 2011  
status Planning

drawn L Boyd  
drg no P61.10.01  
rev A-7/1/2011

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**GROUND FLOOR PLAN**  
 OBSDALE ROAD HOUSING DEVELOPMENT  
 ALNESS, ROSS-SHIRE FOR MR DAVID SKEA

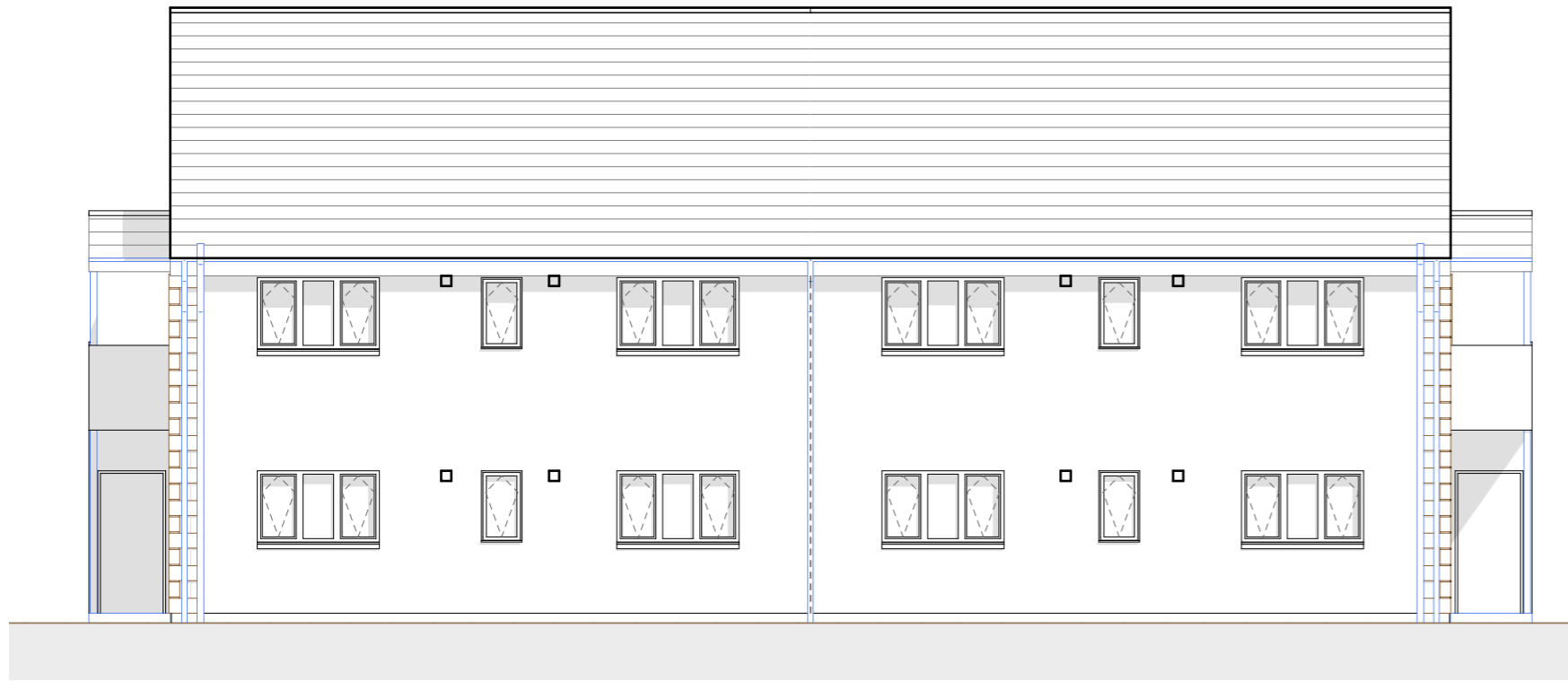
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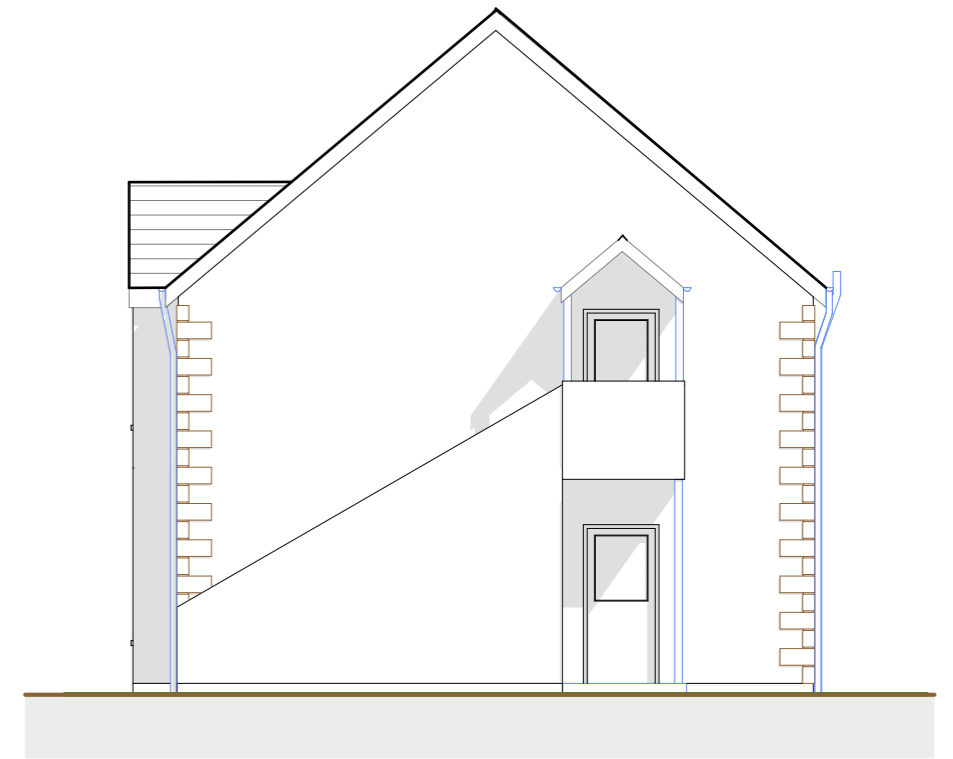
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**FIRST FLOOR PLAN**  
 OBSDALE ROAD HOUSING DEVELOPMENT  
 ALNESS, ROSS-SHIRE FOR MR DAVID SKEA

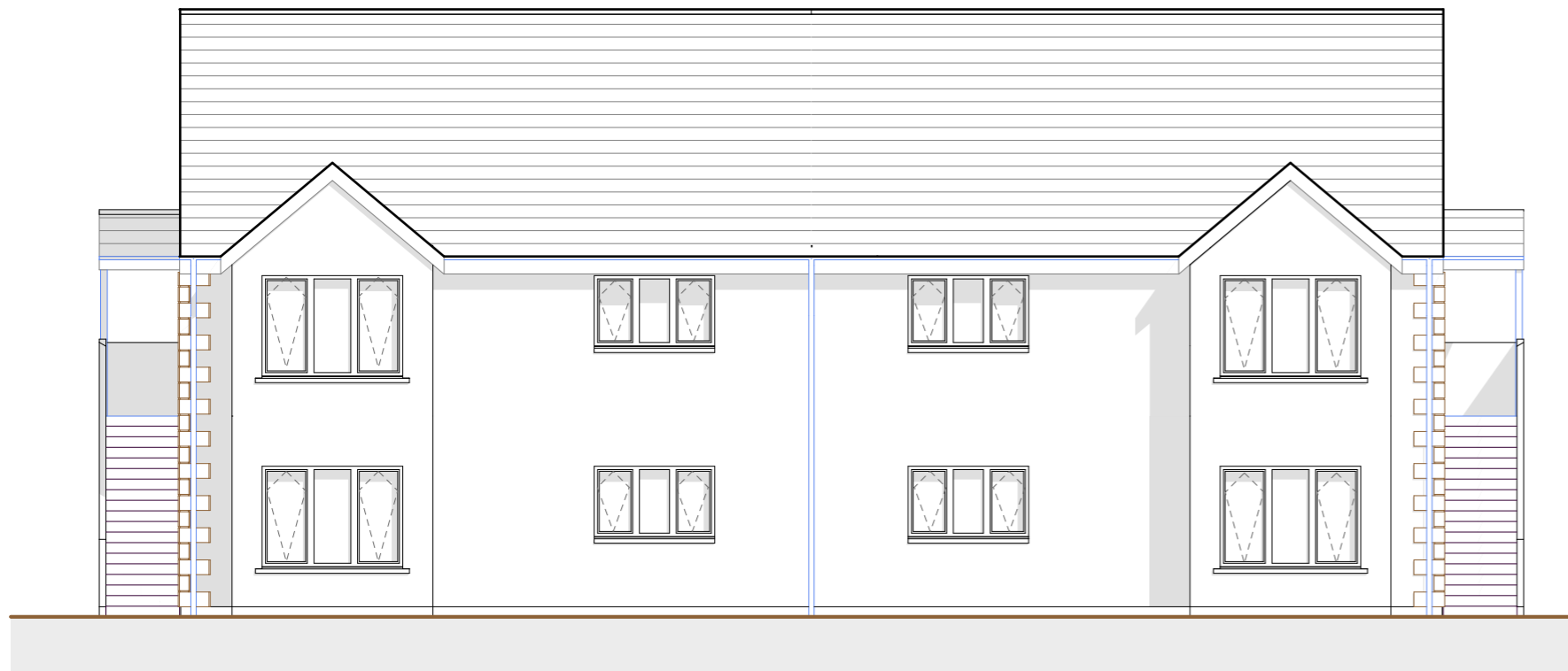
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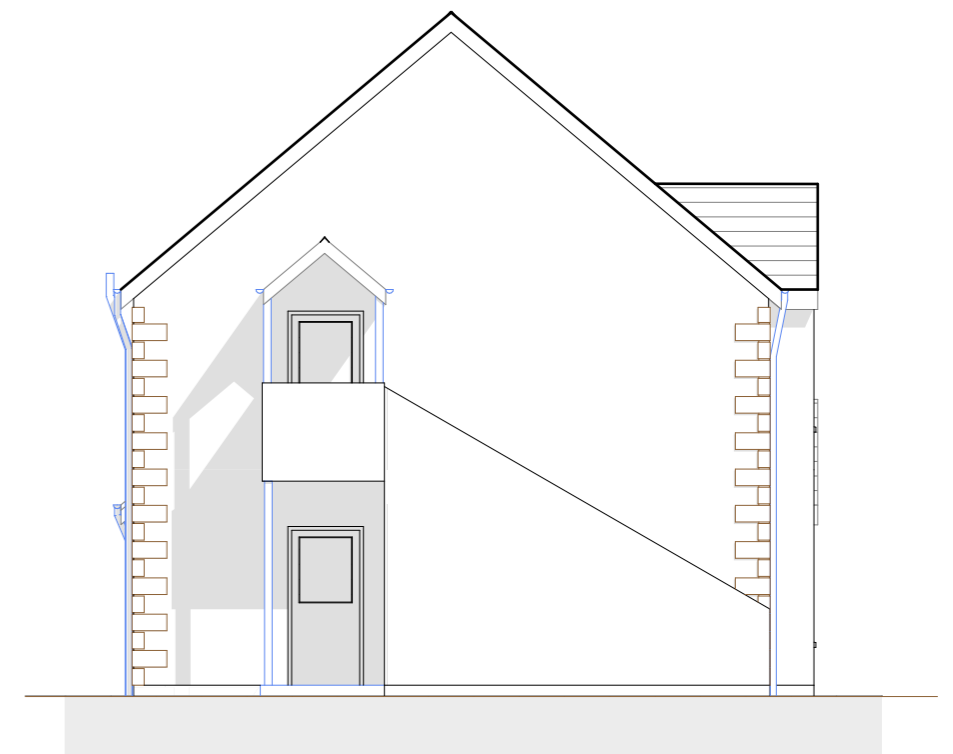
**North Elevation**



**West Elevation**



**South Elevation**



**East Elevation**

**ELEVATIONS**

**OBSDALE ROAD HOUSING DEVELOPMENT  
ALNESS, ROSS-SHIRE FOR MR DAVID SKEA**

**EXTERNAL FINISHES**

Natural slate roof finish.  
Wet dash harling - off white.  
UPVC windows and doors  
UPVC Rainwatergoods

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## Obsdale Road Housing, Alness, Ross-shire

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