

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

CAITHNESS, SUTHERLAND & EASTER ROSS  
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE – 28 June 2011

Agenda Item	3.2
Report No	PLC/031/11

11/01167/FUL: The Highland Council  
Thurso Swimming Pool, Millbank Road, Thurso, KW14 8PS

Report by Area Planning and Building Standards Manager

## SUMMARY

**Description:** Installation of biomass boiler and wood pellet store in external accommodation with a dedicated flue and new fenced off oil storage tank

**Recommendation - GRANT**

**Ward :** 02 - Thurso

**Development category :** Local Development

**Pre-determination hearing :** Not required

**Reason referred to Committee :** Development in which the Council has an interest.

## 1. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 1.1 The proposal is for the installation of two prefabricated boiler units, one to house the boiler and the other a wood pellet store. The proposal also incorporates an external 8.2 metre high flue. The existing oil storage tank will be removed and a new fenced off oil storage tank will be installed. The new external boiler will be connected by a pipe into the flow and return area of the existing swimming pool boiler room. The proposed biomass boiler and fuel store plant units will be designed to integrate with the Leisure Centre building. The units will be finished in a plain grey finish to match the adjacent Leisure Centre building.
- 1.2 The proposed biomass heating system will be based on one 150 kW wood pellet boiler. The existing 240kW oil boilers will be retained to provide supplementary and back-up heating and these will require connection into the new oil storage tank.

## 2. SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The site is located adjacent to the north-west elevation of Thurso Swimming Pool and comprises of a strip of predominantly paved land with trees between the Leisure Centre's existing plant room and the public footway alongside Millbank Road. There is also an existing fenced off bin storage area that will be reduced in size or may need to be relocated as a result of the development. There are a number of mature trees within the site.

### **3. PLANNING HISTORY**

- 3.1 Most recent application 09/00191/FULCA: Construction of changing rooms, club room and ancillary facilities at Rugby Playing Fields approved. The main leisure centre building dates back to 1987.

### **4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

- 4.1 Advertised : Neighbour notification  
Representation deadline : 29/04/2011  
Timeous representations : 0  
Late representations : 0

### **5. CONSULTATIONS**

- 5.1 **Environmental Health:** No objections.
- There is sufficient information in the submission about the layout and dimensions of the proposed stack and the prospective size of the boiler to confirm that there is unlikely to be any significant impact on air quality.
  - Noise issues from the installation should also be unlikely.
  - Noise from deliveries may cause a disturbance therefore a condition restricting the hours that deliveries are made is recommended.
- 5.2 **Forestry Officer:** No objections. Due to there being limited options for locating the biomass boiler and wood pellet store the Forestry Officer accepts the loss of trees, subject to conditions to protect the remaining trees and for additional tree planting within the green area opposite the viewing area.

### **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

### **7. PLANNING APPRAISAL**

- 7.1 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.
- 7.2 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.

- 7.3 A supporting statement has been provided for the development. The supporting statement confirms that the external boiler unit is required due to the lack of space within the existing plant room at the leisure centre. It is confirmed that the new biomass boiler and fuel store will be located alongside the plant room on the Millbank Road elevation of the building. The biomass boiler will supply the majority of the Leisure Centre's heating needs, reducing the dependence on fossil fuels and thereby reducing carbon emissions.
- 7.4 The proposed location will enable a straight forward connection of the biomass boiler into the existing heating system. The proximity to Millbank Road will enable quick and efficient biomass deliveries via a delivery lorry parked on the straight section of Millbank Road adjacent to the Leisure Centre. The developer has indicated in the supporting statement that this is already current practice for other deliveries to the Leisure Centre.
- 7.5 Given that the nearest houses lie 28 metres away to the east of the proposed site, it is considered unlikely that there would be any significant increase in noise from this development. The supporting statement confirms that, in operation, the biomass boiler system should not produce any noticeable noise. It is expected that the noise emissions outside of the boiler room, whilst the boiler is operating, will be less than 45dB(A) at 1 metre. This is less than ambient daytime noise levels in built up areas. During deliveries of fuel, there will be a short period of higher noise levels from the delivery vehicle.
- 7.6 The delivery periods are expected to last for less than 30 minutes, and would occur approximately monthly in winter, less frequently in summer. As part of the operational procedures, deliveries would only be accepted during normal working hours to ensure that deliveries do not cause nuisance to local residents. Environmental Health do not consider that there will be an issue with noise however as the site adjoins a residential area a condition is attached to this consent restricting the hours that deliveries are made.
- 7.7 Loss of immediate trees within the site is unavoidable. The Forestry Officer accepts that there are limited options available for locating the biomass boiler and wood pellet store and therefore accepts the loss of trees, subject to conditions to protect the remaining trees and for additional tree planting within the green area opposite the viewing area serving the pool.

## 8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 The proposal accords with Development Plan policy and there are no third party concerns.

## 9. RECOMMENDATION

<b>Action required before decision issued</b>	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 and reasons:

1. 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

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

2. 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.

3. 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 docketted as relative hereto with no deviation therefrom unless otherwise approved in writing by the Planning Authority.

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

4. Noise from operations conducted on the premises shall not increase the existing noise levels at noise sensitive premises by more than 5dB(A).

**Reason:** In the interest of residential amenity.

5. The adjacent footpath shall remain accessible and free from obstruction during and upon completion of the development.

**Reason:** In the interest of pedestrian safety and amenity.

6. Deliveries of fuel to the site shall take place between the hours of 0800 and 1900 Monday to Friday unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Planning Authority.

**Reason:** In the interests of amenity and in order to avoid disturbance and nuisance.

7. Prior to any site excavation, all retained trees 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 Planning Authority prior to commencement of ground works.

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

8. A minimum of 6 native trees shall be planted within the green area opposite the viewing area. Trees shall be 2.1-2.4 metre  $\frac{1}{2}$  standards, supported with stake and tie and protected against rabbit damage using a spiral guard. In order to reduce weed competition, a 1 metre mulch mat must be placed around the base of the trees, with all edges secured by turf. All trees shall be planted during the first available planting season following completion of the development. Should the trees fail for any reason, then they must be replaced to the same specification during the next planting season.

**Reason:** To compensate for trees removed in order to facilitate the proposed development.

### **Notes to Applicant**

**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.

### **TIME LIMIT FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS PLANNING PERMISSION**

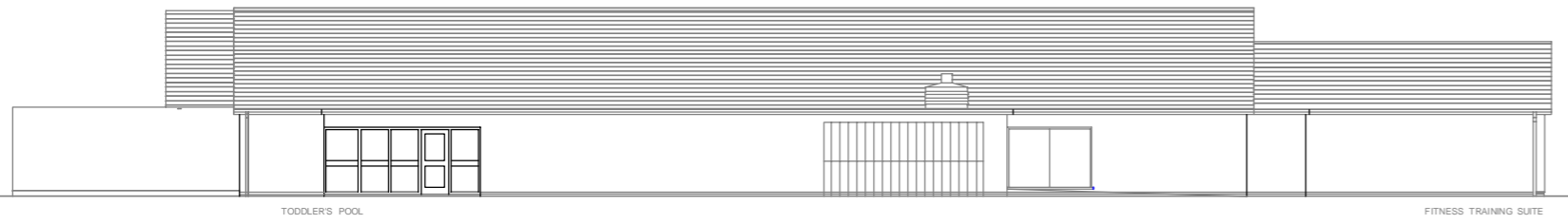
In accordance with Section 58 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended), the development to which this planning permission relates must commence within THREE YEARS of the date of this decision notice. If development has not commenced within this period, then this planning permission shall lapse.

Signature: Allan J Todd  
Designation: Area Planning & Building Standards Manager  
Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross (CSER)  
Author: Andrew Parker  
Background Papers: Documents referred to in report and in case file.  
Relevant Plans: Plan 1 – Location Plan A4  
Plan 2 – Location/site plan and elevations (existing) A1  
Plan 3 – Location/site plan and elevations (proposed) A1  
Plan 4 – Supporting Statement

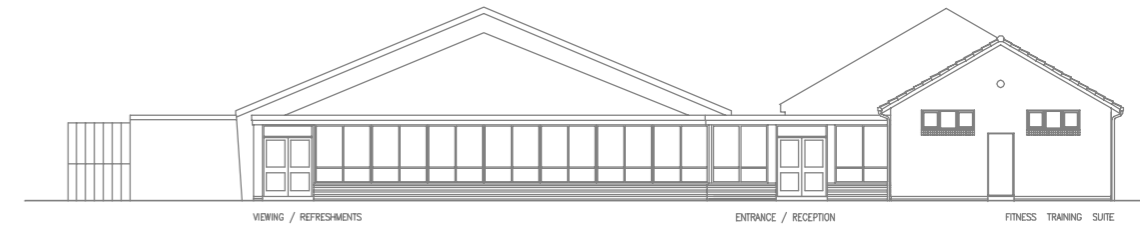


11/01167/FUL  
 Installation of biomass boiler and wood pellet store in external accommodation  
 with a dedicated flue at Thurso Swimming Pool, Millbank Road, Thurso.

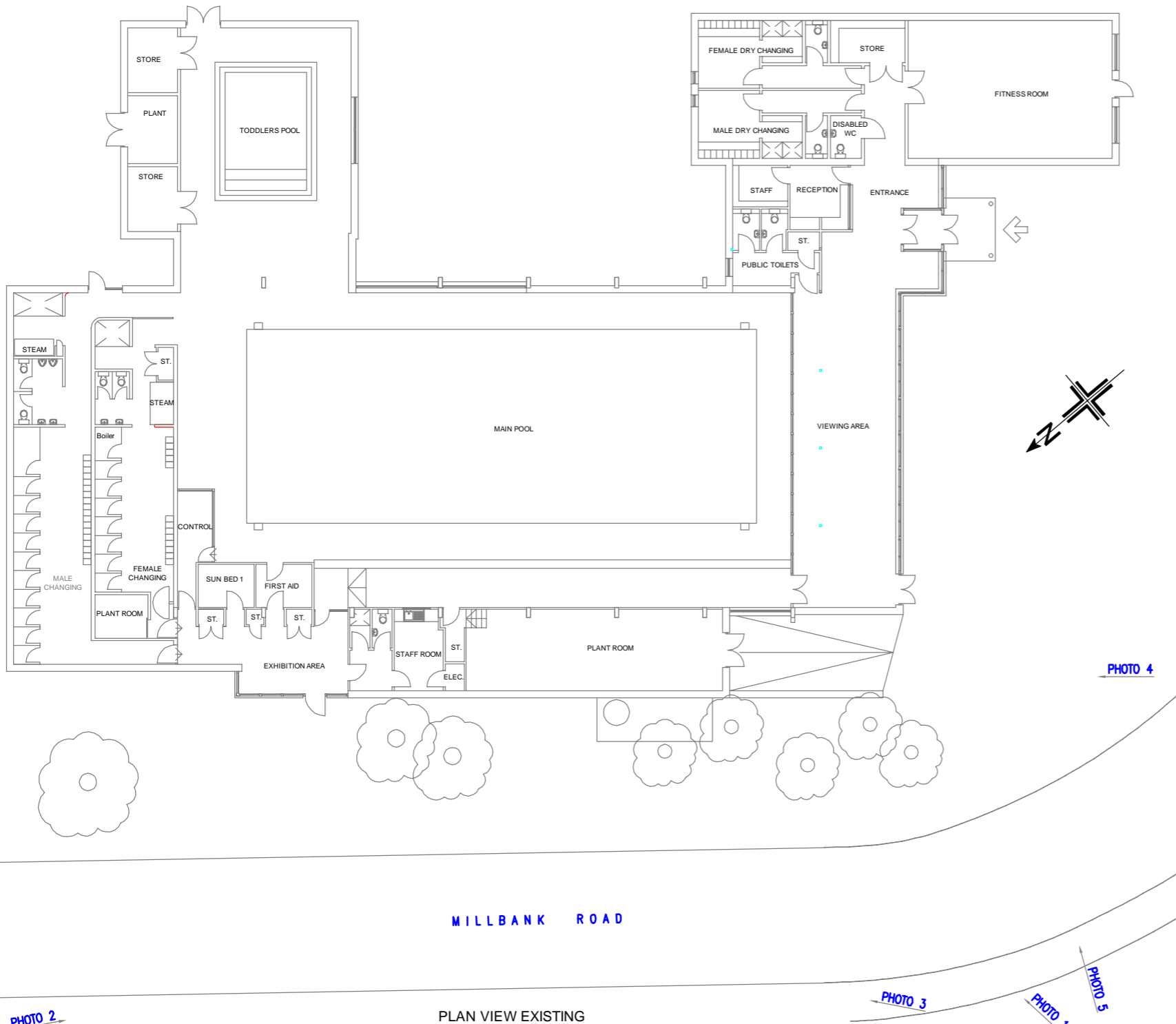
The Highland Council  
 per Parsons Brinckerhoff  
 Royal Exchange House  
 2nd Floor  
 100 Queens Street  
 Glasgow  
 G1 3DN



NORTHWEST ELEVATION



SOUTHWEST ELEVATION



PLAN VIEW EXISTING



PHOTO.1 THURSO SWIMMING POOL



PHOTO.2



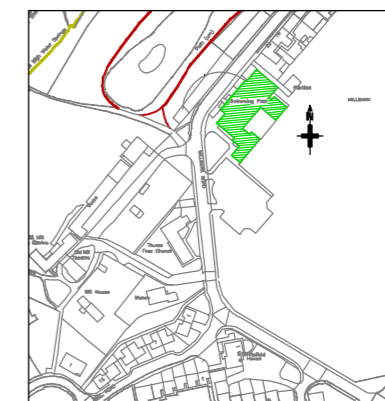
PHOTO.4



PHOTO.3



PHOTO.5



LOCATION PLAN  
Scale 1:2500

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REV.	DETAILS	DRN	CHK	APPR	DATE
B	ISSUED FOR PLANNING	RK	RB	EJ	01:04:11
A	ISSUED FOR CLIENT COMMENT	RK	RB	EJ	08:03:11

• CLIENT  
HIGHLAND COUNCIL

• PROJECT  
THURSO LEISURE CENTRE

• TITLE  
THURSO LEISURE CENTRE  
SITE PLAN & ELEVATIONS  
EXISTING

• DATE 03:03:11  
• SCALE 1/1250A1  
• CAD REF

DRAWN BY RAYK  
PRODUCED BY  
CHECKED RB  
APPROVED EJ



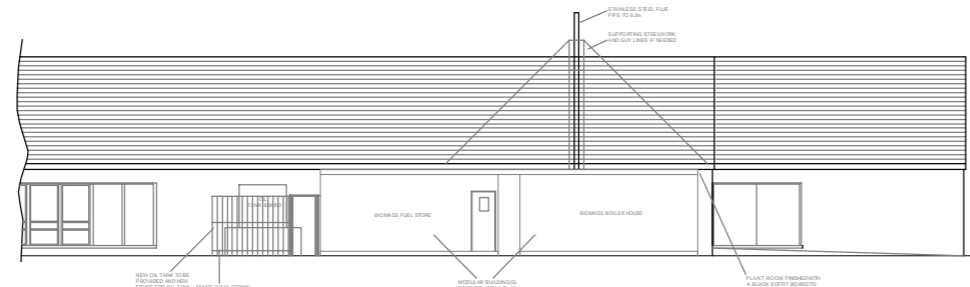
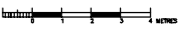
Energy and Sustainable Solutions  
- Infrastructure

6 Devonshire Square, London EC2M 4YE, UK  
Tel: 44-(0)20-7337-1700 Fax: 44-(0)20-7337-1701

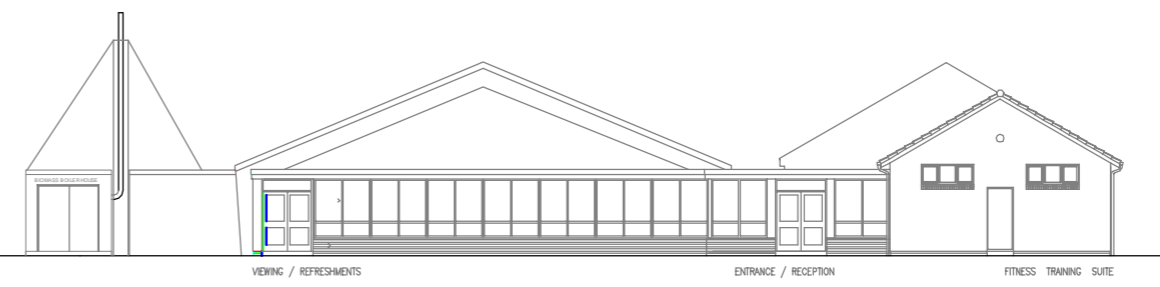
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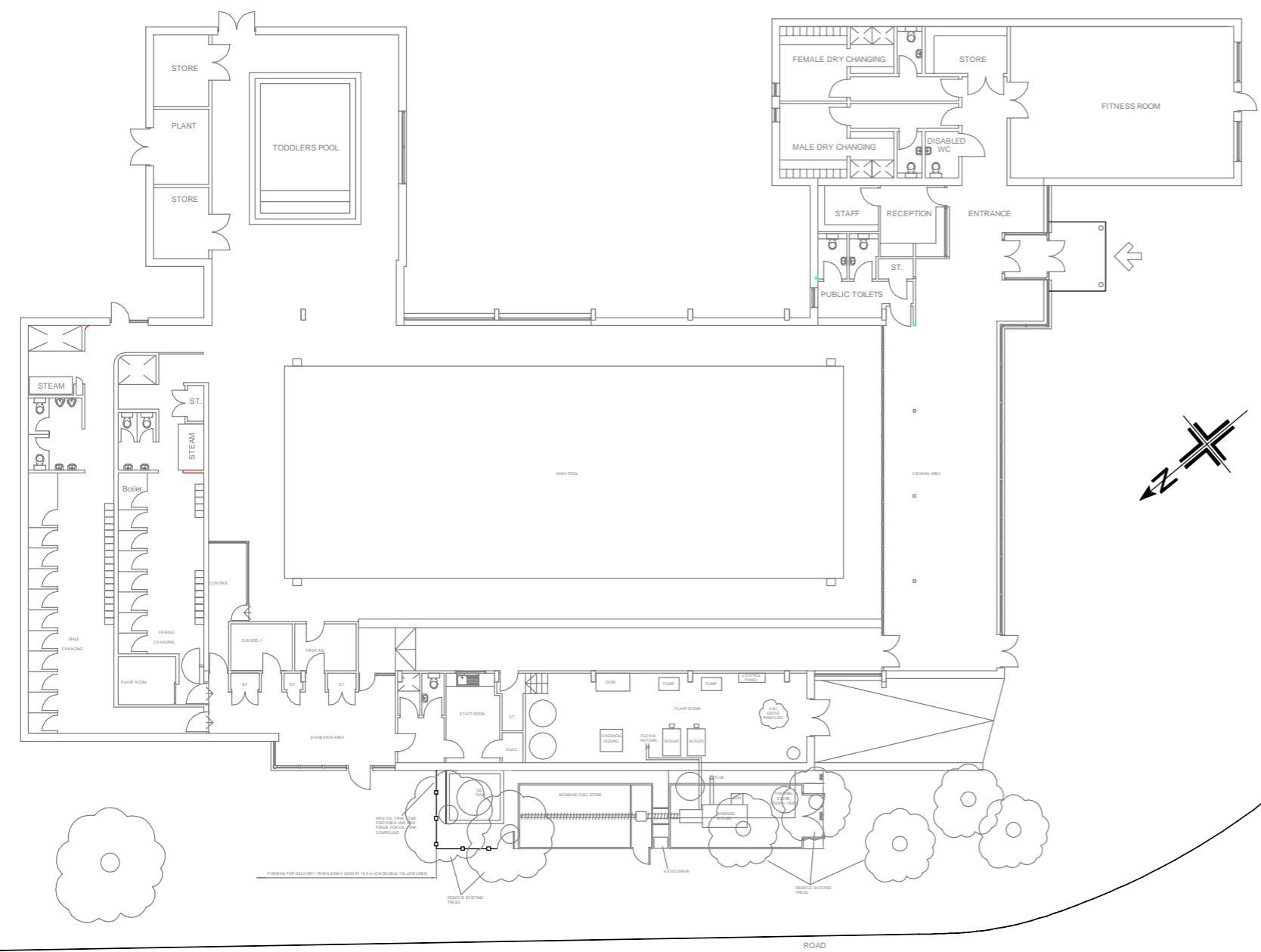




NORTHWEST ELEVATION



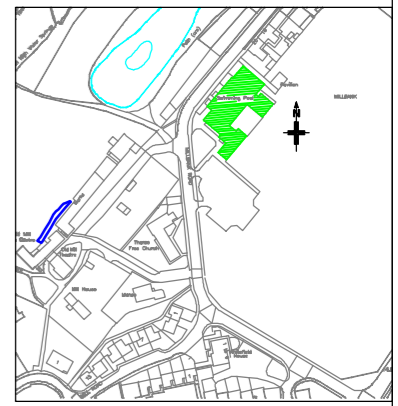
SOUTHWEST ELEVATION



PLAN VIEW

MILLBANK ROAD

PLAN VIEW PROPOSED



LOCATION PLAN  
Scale 1:2500

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TYPICAL PREFABRICATED BOILER HOUSE INTERNAL



TYPICAL PREFABRICATED BOILER HOUSE EXTERNAL


B	ISSUED FOR PLANNING	RK	RB	EJ	01:04:11
A	ISSUED FOR CLIENT COMMENT	RK	RB	EJ	08:03:11
REV.	DETAILS	DRN	CHK	APPR	DATE

• CLIENT  
HIGHLAND COUNCIL

• PROJECT  
THURSO LEISURE CENTRE

• TITLE  
THURSO LEISURE CENTRE  
SITE PLANS AND ELEVATIONS  
PROPOSED

• DATE 03:03:11  
• SCALE 1/1250A1  
• CAD REF

DRAWN BY RAYK  
PRODUCED BY  
CHECKED RB  
APPROVED EJ



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