

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

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

Agenda Item	3.4
Report No	PLC/033/11

**11/01464/FUL: The Highland Council
Thurso High School, Ormlie Road, Thurso, KW14 7DS**

Report by Area Planning and Building Standards Manager

SUMMARY

Description: Thurso High School biomass heating system upgrade, installation of external thermal storage unit for system, modification of existing flue stack to accommodate biomass boiler and conversion of internal oil storage room to biomass store.

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 upgrading of the heating system in the 1970's extension part of Thurso High School with a new biomass heating system. The proposal includes the installation of an external thermal storage unit for the heating system, modification of the existing flue stack to accommodate the proposed 150 kW biomass boiler and the conversion of the existing internal oil storage room into a biomass store. It is proposed to install the new biomass boiler within the existing boiler house. The two aged existing oil fired boilers will be replaced with one new high efficiency oil boiler. The existing oil tank room will be converted into a biomass fuel store for the new boiler by removing the old oil tank.
- 1.2 A new smaller oil tank will be provided in the fenced compound currently used for minibus parking. This compound will also be used to locate a thermal storage tank. The existing chimney stack will be modified to accommodate the biomass boiler flue. The secure minibus parking area will be replaced with a fenced compound taking up part of the grassed area between the boiler house and the staff car park.

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 Thurso High School is split into two distinct areas. The late 1950s original buildings closest to Ormlie Road are heated by an electric storage heater system. Behind these is a large 1970's extension block which includes the proposed site and is currently heated by oil fired boilers and wet radiators. The site is located on the north east corner of the school's light workshop and engineering block and includes the existing internal oil store, internal boiler house and secure fenced flue area. The site also includes the land contained between the existing boiler room, the existing flue and the staff car park.

3. PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 Planning history for Thurso High School is extensive. Previous application 07/00166/FULCA: External insulation to the facade of the 2 storey extension block and the addition of 15 wind catchers to aid ventilation granted 21/05/2007.

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- 4.1 Advertised : None
Representation deadline : 17/05/2011
Timeous representations : 0
Late representations : 0

5. CONSULTATIONS

- 5.1 **Environmental Health:** No objections
- The proposed boiler will utilise the existing 9.4 metre stack that serves the existing oil boilers.
 - The height of the stack should be more than adequate to achieve dispersal of flue gases.
 - The height of the stack is sufficient in terms of air quality.
 - Noise from deliveries may cause a disturbance therefore a condition restricting the hours that deliveries are made is recommended.

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 The optimum size of the boiler was determined by detailed consideration of the High School extension's annual heat demand. The proposed 150kW biomass boiler will meet 70% of the annual heating needs of this part of the school. The new oil boiler will work alongside the biomass boiler to meet peak heating loads on exceptionally cold days and as a back-up.
- 7.4 Due to space limitations in the existing High School extension plant room only the biomass boiler can be accommodated. The thermal store has to be located elsewhere, hence the decision being made by the applicant to locate the thermal store outside the building. The oil storage requirement will reduce as oil will be used less frequently, so by providing a small oil storage tank outside the building, the existing oil storage room can be converted and utilised as a biomass store. The biomass will account for the majority of fuel used by this part of the school. The supporting statement indicates that the biomass boiler will supply the majority of the extension part of Thurso High School heating needs, reducing the dependence on fossil fuels and thereby reducing carbon emissions.
- 7.5 The existing oil storage tank is located in a room next to the existing plant room. This location is required for the biomass fuel store. An oil tank must be retained as the oil boilers will be retained for back-up and peak load purposes. Hence the new fuel storage tank will be provided within the secure plant room compound. The old tank will be drained, removed and dismantled off site.
- 7.6 The existing 9.4 metre high chimney will be retained as part of this development and adapted to allow the flue gasses from the biomass boiler as well as the old boiler to safely disperse. Environmental Health have no objections to the continued use of the existing chimney stack that is considered more than adequate to disperse gases and sufficient in terms of air quality.
- 7.7 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 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. In addition during deliveries of fuel, there will be a short period of higher noise levels from the delivery vehicle. 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.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 The proposal accords with Development Plan policy and provides a much more sustainable heating method for the extension part of Thurso High School. The development conforms to policy G2 of the Structure Plan as it increases sustainability by reducing carbon emissions. There are no third party concerns.

9. 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 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. 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.

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

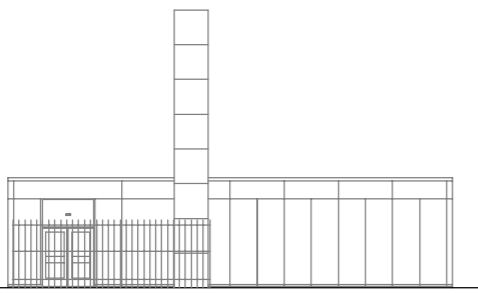
In accordance with Section 58 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended), the development to which this planning permission relates must commence within THREE YEARS of the date of this decision notice. If development has not commenced within this period, then this planning permission 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 PEW285491A-1-M020 Rev B
Plan 3 – Location/site plan and elevations (proposed) A1 PEW285491A-1-M021 Rev C
Plan 4 – Supporting Statement

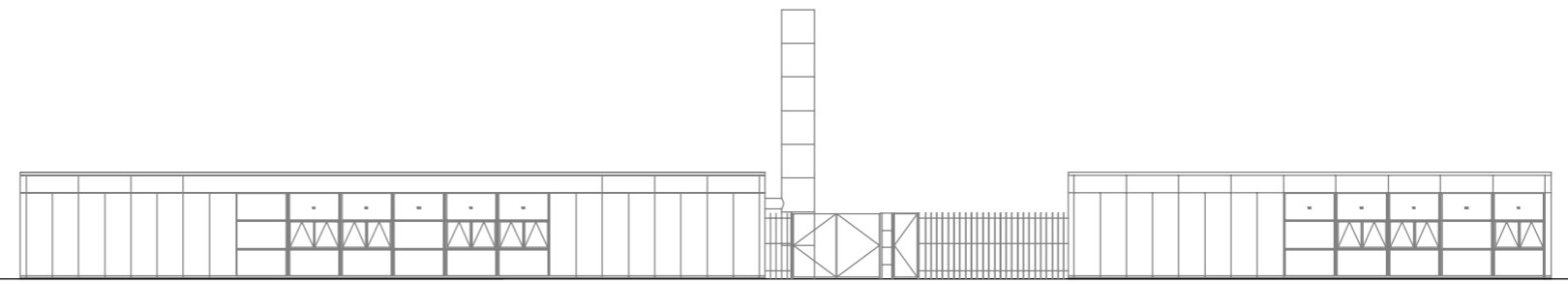


11/01464/FUL
Installation of external thermal storage unit for system, modification of existing flue stack to accommodate biomass boiler, and conversion of internal oil storage room to biomass store at Thurso High School, Ormlie Road, Thurso.

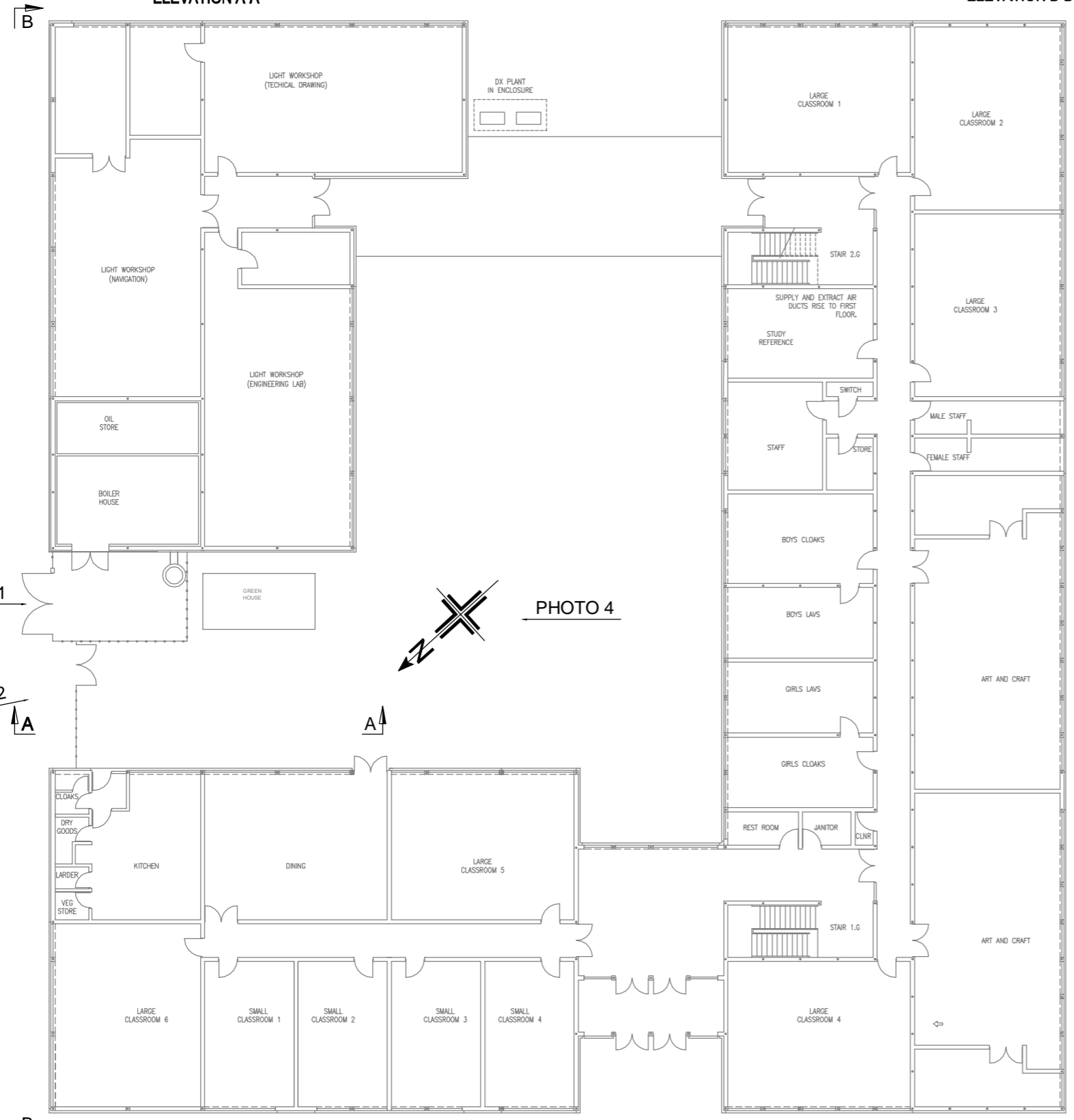
The Highland Council
per Parsons Brinckerhoff
Royal Exchange House
2nd Floor
100 Queens Street
Glasgow
G1 3DN



ELEVATION A-A



ELEVATION B-B



THURSO HIGH SCHOOL EXTENSION BLOCK
GROUND FLOOR LAYOUT



PHOTO 4



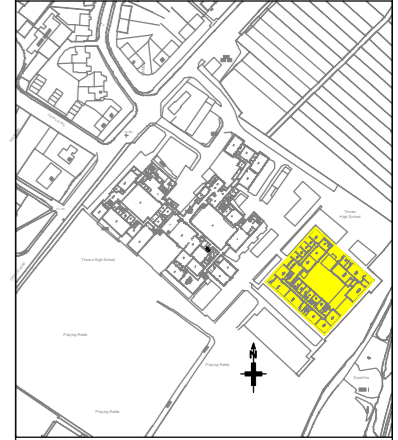
PHOTO 3



PHOTO 2



PHOTO 1



LOCATION PLAN
1/2500

B	ISSUED FOR PLANNING	RK	RB	EJ	01:04:11
A	ISSUED FOR CLIENT COMMENT	RK	RB	EJ	09:03:11
REV.	DETAILS	DRN	CHK	APPR	DATE

• CLIENT
HIGHLAND COUNCIL

• PROJECT
THURSO HIGH SCHOOL

• TITLE
THURSO HIGH SCHOOL
EXISTING LAYOUT

• DATE	03:03:11	DRAWN BY	RAYK
• SCALE	1/1250A1	PRODUCED BY	
• CAD REF		CHECKED	RB
		APPROVED	EJ

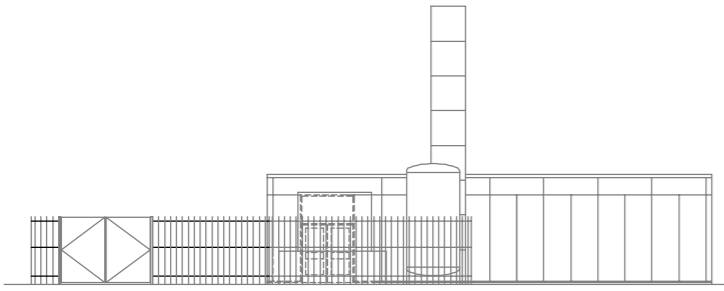
PARSONS BRINCKERHOFF

**Energy and Sustainable Solutions
- Infrastructure**

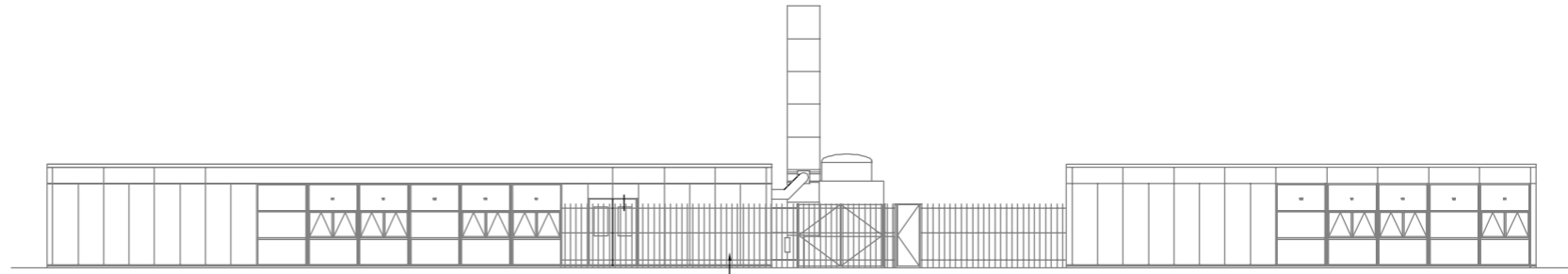
6 Devonshire Square, London EC2M 4YE, UK
Tel: 44-(0)20-7337-1700 Fax: 44-(0)20-7337-1701

• DRAWING NUMBER
PEW285491A-1-M0201 B

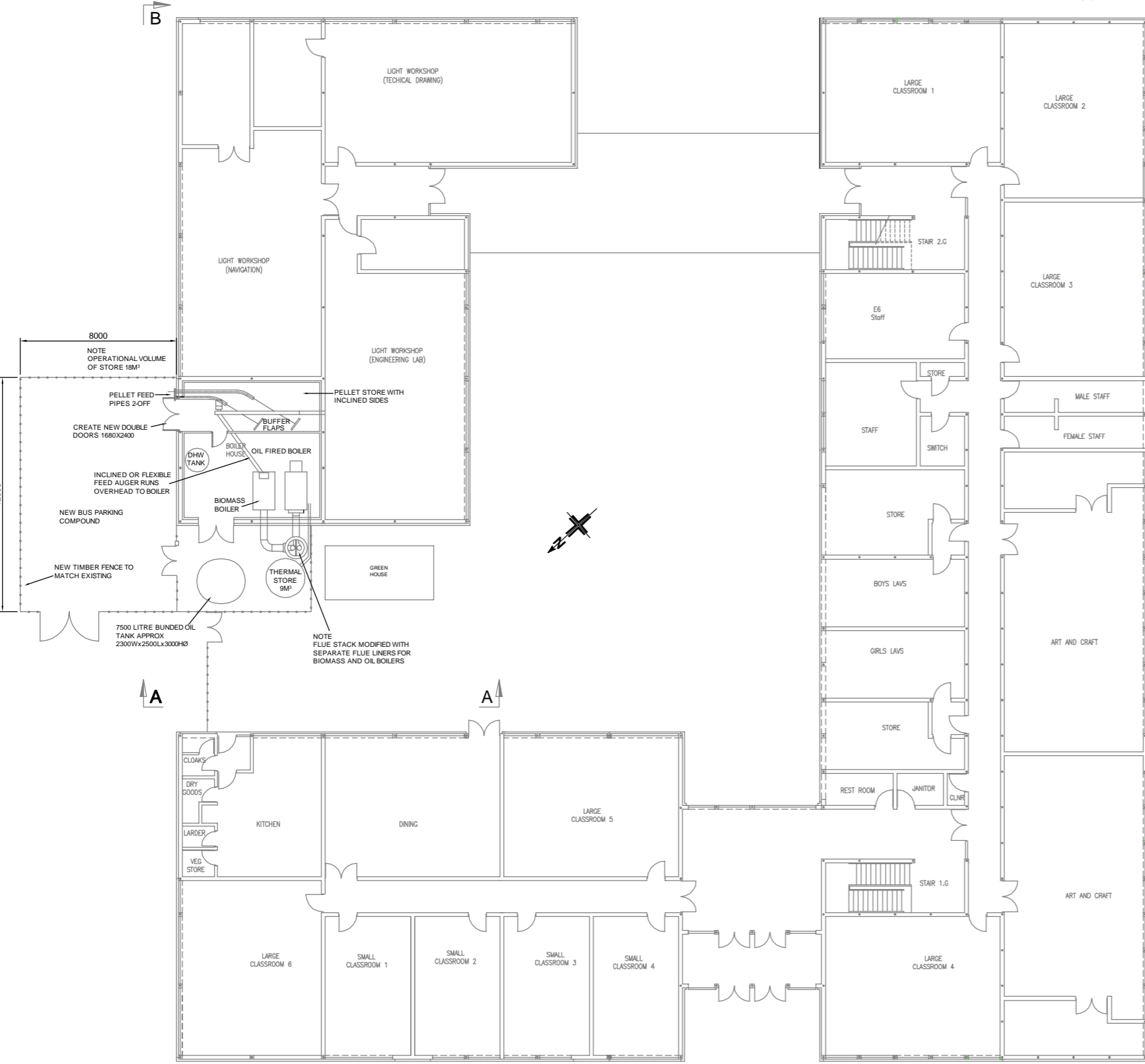
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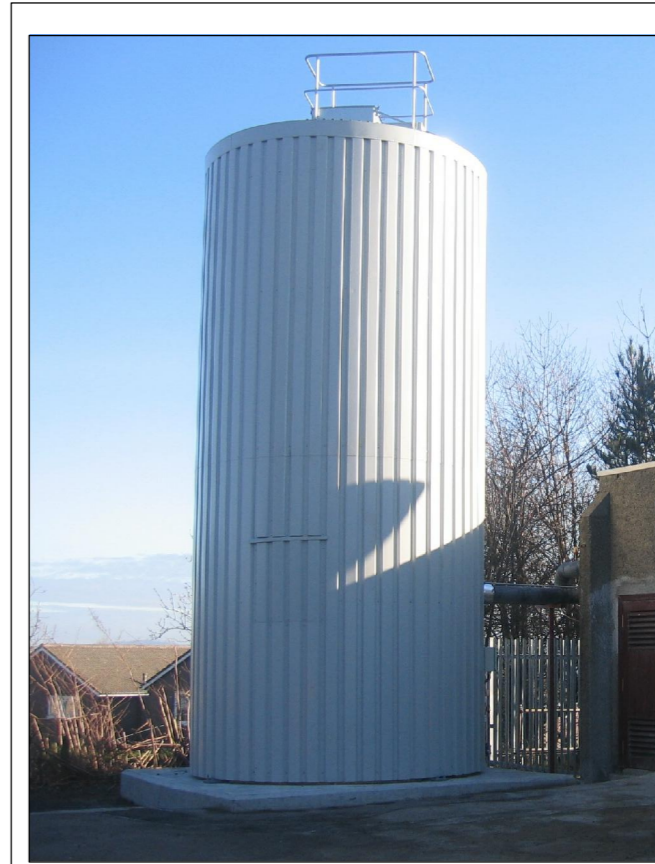
ELEVATION A-A



ELEVATION B-B



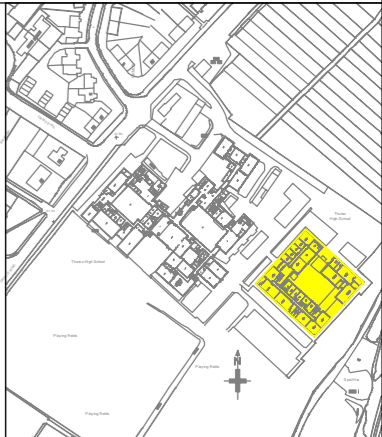
THURSO HIGH SCHOOL EXTENSION BLOCK
GROUND FLOOR LAYOUT



TYPICAL THERMAL STORE
INSTALLATION



TYPICAL BIOMASS BOILER
INSTALLATION



LOCATION PLAN
1/2500

REV.	DETAILS	DRN	CHK	APPR	DATE
C	BUS PARKING COMPOUND ADDED	RK	RB	EJ	01:04:11
B	BUS PARKING COMPOUND ADDED	RK	RB	EJ	23:03:11
A	ISSUED FOR CLIENT COMMENT	RK	RB	EJ	09:03:11

• CLIENT
HIGHLAND COUNCIL

• PROJECT
THURSO HIGH SCHOOL

• TITLE
THURSO HIGH SCHOOL
PROPOSED PLANT LAYOUT

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

DRAWN BY RAYK
PRODUCED BY
CHECKED RB
APPROVED EJ



Energy and Sustainable Solutions
- Infrastructure

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