THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Agenda Item	7.4
Report No	PLS/087/14

SOUTH PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE
18 November 2014

14/03000/FUL: Norbord Europe Ltd
Dalcross OSB Mill, Dalcross, Inverness

Report by Head of Planning and Building Standards

SUMMARY

Description: Construction of new process buildings and equipment for a new Oriented Strand Board (OSB) Mill and Biomass Heat Plant (and phased decommissioning of elements of existing OSB mill when the new mill is operational) and ancillary works.

Recommendation: **GRANT**

Ward: 18 – Culloden and Ardersier

Development category: Major

Pre-determination hearing: None

Reason referred to Committee: Manager's Discretion

1.0 PROPOSAL

1.1 This proposal is for the construction of new process buildings and equipment for a new Oriented Strand Board (OSB) Mill and Biomass Heat Plant at Norbord, Dalcross, Inverness (Plan 1).

1.2 The development would increase the annual production from approximately 350,000m^3 of OSB per year from the existing plant, which has a single wood flake preparation system supplying two OSB production lines (OSB1 and OSB2), to approximately 750,000m^3 per year with a new higher capacity continuous press line. The development proposes an additional log storage area, wood flake preparation facilities, heat raising plant and office facilities to support the increase in capacity.

1.3 The proposed development is at a conceptual design stage. The applicant has stated that the final design will not be completed until a construction contract is in place. The application has therefore been submitted on the basis of a 'Parameter Plan' (Plan 2) the purpose of which is to define limits to the proposed development and assist the assessment of the likely significant effects through the Environmental Statement (ES). This approach is intended to provide a degree of

flexibility in the final layout and heights of certain buildings and plant. For example, it allows a limit of deviation for the proposed new stack location. The stack could be located anywhere within the allocated space with the exact location dependent upon final detailed design by the principal contractor.

1.4 The development is anticipated to take place in four phases. Plans 3 - 6 illustrate the buildings and plant that will be present on site during each phase of development. Plan 4 provides an indicative final layout for the site. Plan 7 shows the worst case scenario.

Phase 1 (2015-16 construction/2017 operation)

1.5 Phase 1 comprises the construction of the following elements to support OSB3:

- conversion of the existing Scotbark building to accommodate a new wood room (debarking drums and flakers);
- construction of a new heat plant (initially comprising a new 57 MW thermal heat raising biomass burner to raise thermal energy for the drier (hot air) and press (thermal oil);
- One dryer, one new Hydroair Wet Electrostatic Precipitator (WESP) and a new stack designed for the later addition of a second dryer/WESP;
- new conveyors to transfer dried wood flakes to the new screens which would be housed under a canopy;
- further conveyors to transfer the screened flakes to the blender area;
- Construction of two new buildings to house respectively: the blenders; a new forming line and continuous press. Adjacent to the press/forming hall would be a “lean-to” two-storey structure containing a control room, open plan offices, first aid, lunchroom, toilets, thermal oil room, hydraulic room, switch room and other ancillary rooms; and
- the finishing end will be installed in the existing production buildings in a phased approach as existing equipment is removed.

1.6 Following construction, OSB3 would be commissioned and begin production. In terms of process, the bark from the debarking drums are combined with non-specification flake from the screens with any non-compliant wood (i.e. dust and very large particles) used to provide approximately half of the required feedstock for the new burner once both driers are installed (Phase 4). During Phase 1, bark will be used in the new biomass burner and dust in the existing driers. The balance will come from locally sourced biomass. Gas backup will be provided and may be needed for start-up, but by the final operating scenario the plant will be designed to obtain 100% of its heat requirement from biomass fuel (although in practice 95% has been assumed).

1.7 The dried flake is separated from the flue gas, with 50% of the hot flue gas recirculated around the dryer system. The remaining exhaust gas is cleaned in the new WESP 2 before release via the new stack. The dried flakes are then screened to remove fine material (which would be either burned in the existing dryers, or the new biomass burner). These screens are to be placed under a canopy (footprint of around 400m^2) to protect them from rain, but the sides would be left open. The screened flakes would then be transported to four dry bins in enclosed conveyors.

1.8 Flakes are moved from the dry bins into blending systems to mix them with resin and wax emulsion. The resin and wax is to be stored in ten 80 m^3 vertical tanks. The treated flakes are then transported to the forming station in enclosed conveyors. The forming station lays down the flakes on the forming belt in enclosed forming heads, creating a prepared mat. The blending and forming areas are enclosed and contained within new a building with a footprint of approximately 4,000m^2 and 28m high. This building will also contain ancillary services such as emergency generators and air compressors.

1.9 The prepared mat is then transported to the press on an open belt. The mat is trimmed and pre-heated with steam before being passed into a heated continuous press. Trimmed material is returned in an enclosed system to either the forming station or a fifth bin before being placed back into the system.

1.10 Exhaust gases from the press are pre-cleaned before being transferred to the new WESP and vented via the new stack. Some press exhaust gases may be used as primary air for the biomass burner. Saw, sanding and general dust from the production process is collected in filtered extraction systems before being screened. Accepted material would be returned to the board, whilst reject material will be stored in a silo and burned in the heat energy system.

1.11 After the press, the OSB produced is trimmed and cut into master panels, which are cooled and stacked in 5m high stacks stored in a 'buffer' area. From this area, the master panels are fed into any of four finishing lines where they may be sanded, cut into square standard panels, cut into tongue and groove panels or cut according to customer specifications.

1.12 After finishing, the boards are passed to a packaging line where they are strapped and packaged for onward shipment. These packs are transported through to the warehouse by forklift truck, where they are stored prior to despatch.

1.13 During the construction of the new buildings, plant and equipment required for OSB3, the existing OSB1 and OSB2 will continue to operate as normal with air emissions from the three existing dryers and existing presses being discharged to the existing WESP and stack. Once the new OSB3 is operational during this phase (approximately 2016), production would start to switchover from OSB2 to OSB3. This period of operation where all three OSB production lines are operating would deliver the worst case scenario set out within the ES. By the end of 2016 it is anticipated that OSB2 would be fully decommissioned, that OSB1 would continue at production capacity of approximately 180,000m^3/annum and that OSB3 would achieve an output of approximately 200,000m^3, rising to 320,000m^3/annum the following year. Under the final operating condition under Phase 1 both the existing WESP and existing stack, and the new WESP and new combined stack operate in parallel.

Phase 2 (2018)

1.14 During Phase 2, the production and finishing end of OSB1 would be decommissioned and the production on OSB3 would increase to approximately 550,000m^3/annum. The existing wood preparation facilities, including the existing

three dryers, would continue to be used for wood flake preparation and the existing three dryers would continue to discharge air emissions via the existing WESP and stack. Under the final operating condition under Phase 2 both the existing WESP and existing stack, and the new WESP and new combined stack operate in parallel. This is the stage where the worst case scenario is predicted (Plan 7).

Phase 3 (2019)

1.15 During Phase 3 a second new WESP would be installed and connected to the new combined stack. This new stack will have an overall height of 51.4m AOD. Air emissions from the existing three dryers would then be transferred by new pipe infrastructure to the second new WESP and combined stack for discharge. Under the final operating conditions under Phase 3 all emissions from the dryers and press would discharge via the two new WESPs and combined stack. The existing WESP and existing stack would be decommissioned.

Phase 4 (2024)

1.16 During Phase 4, the original three dryers would be decommissioned and replaced by a second new biomass burner (heat raising plant) and dryer. A new flaker would also be installed at this time. Subsequently production on OSB3 would continue to gradually increase year on year until a production output of 750,000m^3/annum was achieved.

1.17 The timescales for the full implementation of Phases 1-4 are dependent upon a range of factors, however it is anticipated that this could range from 3-10 years. Phase 4 would deliver the final operation scenario described in the ES (Plan 4).

Decommissioning

1.18 The proposed design life of the new OSB3 mill is approximately 25 years. Decommissioning has not been considered under this application in anticipation that it will be considered when necessary under the legislation prevailing at the time.

1.19 As intimated, the application is supported by an Environmental Statement (ES). The focus of the ES relates to the impact on air and water environment, the impact of noise, landscape and visual impact and cultural heritage effects associated with this and traffic and transport.

1.20 The development is estimated, at the final operating condition, to result in an increase from 149 to 185 direct jobs. In total the development would support the creation of around 530 new jobs in Scotland, including 240 in the Highland and Islands Enterprise (HIE) area, generate £36.9 million gross value added (GVA) of new economic activity for the Scottish economy each year, of which £22.0 million would be retained within the HIE area, safeguard more than 680 existing Scottish jobs, including around 440 in the HIE area and safeguard £39.6 million GVA of current economic activity, £26.4 million of which occurs in the HIE area.

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 The application boundary includes the existing Norbord site and the identified expansion area to the east, an area of some 22.5ha. The expansion area, which equates to 12.87ha comprises of the wood processing facility, operated by Scotbark, and part of an existing sand quarry operated by Moray Estates, which together equate to some 4.9ha. The balance is an area of rough grazing/wetland.

2.2 The site is bounded to the north by the Inverness – Aberdeen railway line and to the south by the A96(T). The main access to the site is from the A96(T). The surrounding area is predominantly farmland, with dispersed buildings typically of one or two houses located together. The farmland is on the whole flat and low lying with areas of improved and semi-improved grassland. Beyond the areas of farmland to the north, east and south of the application site there are areas of mixed woodland.

2.3 The nearest residential properties are located approximately 200m southwest of the existing site boundary, on the A96(T) although there are a scattering of properties in the vicinity, to the north in particular. The nearest larger settlement is the village of Tornagrain, located approximately 950m east of the application site boundary at its closest point.

3.0 PLANNING HISTORY

3.1 30.06.2014 - Planning permission for site preparation works to include: earthworks, foundations and retaining walls, drainage works, upgrade access and internal road and landscaping to facilitate new OSB Mill granted (14/01763/FUL).

3.2 14.06.2013 – Planning permission for the installation of additional chimney for gas burner granted (13/01288/FUL).

3.3 10.09.2013 – Planning permission for the formation of access tracks and storage of round wood granted (13/02803/FUL).

3.4 1990 - Planning permission for the erection of building to accommodate bark screening, separation and bagging operations by Scotbark granted (IN/1990/747).

3.5 1983 - Planning permission for the erection of buildings by Highland Forest Products Ltd granted (IN/1983/300).

4.0 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

4.1 Advertised: 15.08.2014

Representation deadline: 29.08.2014

Timeous representations: 0

Late representations: 0

5.0 CONSULTATIONS

5.1 Ardersier and Petty Community Council advise that no concerns had been raised to the Community Council by the community and the Community Council had no concerns on the planning application itself. The only point which was raised was the suggestion to install a rail access point to the plant to reduce the road traffic and therefore the carbon footprint. The Community Council expressed a wish to continue to be informed on the progress of the development.

5.2 Community Services – Environmental Health has advised verbally that their interests, in respect of operational noise and air quality, will be adequately covered by SEPA under the PPC permit that will be required for this facility.

5.3 Community Services – Contaminated Land advise that the proposed development would not appear to materially change the risk of potential contamination. As such a contaminated land condition is not recommended.

5.4 Development and Infrastructure – Flood Team has no objection.

5.5 Development and Infrastructure – Transport Planning has no objection. It advises that; "The local roads in the Highlands are of variable quality and many were not designed for modern heavy haulage. As a result, transporting logs from our forests to the processors can impact on the condition of the local road network.

In order to sustain the local road network, the Council, working with the Highland Regional Timber Transport Group, have drawn up a Good Practice Guide and Agreed Routes Maps for timber haulage. The guide and maps form the basis of the Timber Transport Forum's partnership approach to managing timber traffic. This is a voluntary framework, developed and maintained with widespread support from the local authorities, timber hauliers and the forestry and timber industries. The Forum urges all those involved in timber haulage to make use of the guide and maps and to liaise with the local authorities where indicated."

5.6 Development and Infrastructure – Forestry Team has no objection to the proposal subject to conditions to secure the planting of trees within the first planting season following commencement of the development and that the landscaping scheme as a whole is supervised by a suitably qualified landscape consultant.

5.7 Development and Infrastructure – Historic Environment Team advises that while there will be adverse impacts to important archaeological features and historic buildings it concurs with the overall findings of the ES that these are unlikely to be significant.

5.8 Transport Scotland: No objection.

5.9 Scottish Natural Heritage has no comment to make on this application.

5.10 SEPA advises that the site has a permit to operate under the Pollution Prevention and Control (Scotland) Regulations 2012 (PPC) and that due to the scale of the new plant the applicant will be required to apply to SEPA to make a substantial

variation to the existing PPC permit. The PPC Regulations require that an installation is operated in such a way that all the appropriate preventative measures are taken against pollution, in particular through the application of the best available techniques (BAT), and that no significant pollution is caused. As the applicant has not submitted a parallel PPC application, SEPA's advice is given without prejudice to the outcome of its future decision on the PPC permit.

SEPA's response, based on the fact that these matters will be determined at PPC stage, extends not only to the usual impact of pollution on groundwater and the water environment but also takes into consideration air quality, odour, noise and energy efficiency.

Subject to conditions requiring submission of an environmental management plan and details of chemical and waste storage facilities SEPA has no objection.

5.11 Historic Scotland has advised that it is content to agree with the findings of the ES as they relate to its remit. It welcomes inclusion of the photomontages that adequately convey the level of impact on this asset. The ES notes that the current baseline setting of the castle includes the existing mill and that the proposal will not significantly alter this aspect of the castle's setting. Historic Scotland agree with the predicted effect on the setting of the castle that is stated as being of low magnitude and minor significance is reports. As such Historic Scotland has no objection.

5.12 Network Rail has no objections in principle but due to its close proximity to the operational railway it requests that the following matters are taken into account, and if necessary and appropriate included as conditions or advisory notes, if the application is granted:

1. If not already in place, the applicant must provide a suitable trespass proof fence of at least 1.8 metres in height adjacent to Network Rail's boundary and provision for the fence's future maintenance and renewal should be made. A 1.8 metre high 'rivetless palisade' or 'expanded mesh' fence is recommended. Network Rail's existing boundary measure must not be removed without prior permission.

2. Construction works need to be undertaken in a safe manner which does not disturb the operation of the neighbouring railway. Applicants will need to be aware of any embankments and supporting structures which are in close proximity to their development.

3. Details of all changes in ground levels, laying of foundations and operation of mechanical plant in proximity to the rail line must be submitted to Network Rail's Asset Protection Engineer for approval prior to works commencing on site. Where any works cannot be carried out in a "fail-safe" manner, it will be necessary to restrict those works to periods when the railway is closed to rail traffic i.e. by a "possession" which must be booked via Network Rail's Asset Protection Engineer and are subject to a minimum prior notice period for booking of 20 weeks.

5.13 Highlands and Islands Airports Ltd considers that the development would not infringe the safeguarding surfaces for Inverness Airport. It asks that the developer to liaise with HIAL on use of cranes during construction and the need for aviation lighting.

6.0 DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICY

The following policies are relevant to the assessment of the application:

Highland-wide Local Development Plan (April 2012)

6.1

Policy 28	Sustainable Design
Policy 29	Design Quality and Place-Making
Policy 30	Physical Constraints
Policy 36	Development in the Wider Countryside
Policy 41	Business and Industrial Land
Policy 42	Previously Used Land
Policy 57	Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage
Policy 58	Protected Species
Policy 59	Other Important Species
Policy 61	Landscape
Policy 63	Water Environment
Policy 64	Flood Risk
Policy 66	Surface Water Drainage
Policy 67	Renewable Energy Developments
Policy 72	Pollution
Policy 73	Air Quality

Inverness Local Plan (April 2006) (as continued in force)

6.2 A96 Corridor Policy 7 Morayhill – timber processing/renewables (12ha)

Supplementary Planning Policy Guidance

6.3 None.

7.0 OTHER MATERIAL POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Scottish Government Planning Policy and Guidance

7.1 Scottish Planning Policy
National Planning Framework 3

7.2 PAN 52 *Planning, Environmental Protection and Regulation*

Inner Moray Firth Proposed Local Development Plan (November 2013)

7.3 MH1 Morayhill – industrial land allocation (10.6 ha)

8.0 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.

Determining Issues

8.2 The determining issues are:

- do the proposals accord with the development plan?
- if they do accord, are there any compelling reasons for not approving them?
- if they do not accord, are there any compelling reasons for approving them?

Planning Considerations

8.3 In order to address the determining issues, the Committee must consider: a) compliance with the development plan and other planning policy; b) the effect on habitat and species; c) construction impacts and pollution control; d) operational impacts and pollution control; e) landscape and visual impacts relating to design; f) the associated impact on built and cultural heritage, and g) any other material considerations.

Development Plan/Planning Policy

8.4 Highland wide Local Development Plan Policy 41 – Business and Industrial Land directs new business and industrial development to strategic and industrial sites/locations. Policy 42 – Previously Used Land supports development proposals that bring previously-used land back into beneficial use provided site investigations and risk assessments demonstrate the site condition as suitable for the proposed development. Policy 28 – Sustainable Design outlines the Council's support for developments which promote and enhance the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of the people of Highland. Policy 36 - Development in the Wider Countryside also applies. Various considerations and safeguards are built into the policy wording. In addition, Policies 57 (Cultural and Built Heritage), 58 and 59 (Protected Species) and 61 (Landscape) amongst others highlighted in paragraph 6.1 above are all relevant to this application and require to be given due weight.

8.5 Turning to specific land allocations, The Inverness Local Plan (March 2006) identifies 12.0ha of land east of the timber processing plant at Morayhill for downstream or dependent activities and/or renewable energy production subject to adequate drainage.

8.6 The use of the site continues to be supported in the Inner Moray Firth Proposed Local Development Plan, albeit at a slightly reduced area of 10.6ha, subject to the use of the existing access to the A96(T) and provision of internal access, surface water drainage, appropriate SUDS drainage, assessment of noise, dust and fumes from any intensified industrial activity, and species survey including badgers.

8.7 In summary, the Development Plan allocates the land for development related to the existing timber board manufacturing/processing. The proposal involves the overall expansion and intensification of activities on the site with the creation of a modern, energy efficient plant that will contribute to the economic development of the area. Indeed planning permission has already been granted for the preparation works that provide the platform for the development of the OSB3 mill and biomass heat energy plant.

8.8 Providing that the impacts of this development would not have a significantly detrimental impact on; the landscape and cultural heritage resource of the area through demonstration of sensitive siting and design, residential amenity, species and habitats and the surrounding environment in respect of potential ground and air pollution, then the proposals would comply with the Development Plan.

Habitats and Species

8.9 The site is not of significant value with regard to its ecology. Mitigation arising from the impact of the enabling works required creation of alternative nesting locations for sand martins within the active sand quarry that may be destroyed by the development. The site and surroundings are used extensively by badger. However, a license has been granted by SNH for the applicant to erect fencing to exclude badgers from the development area. Once it is established that badger have left the area, the setts will be destroyed under supervision of an ecologist. As per the enabling works permission, following completion of the construction, the exclusion fencing will be removed and a wildlife corridor created on the north boundary of the site to allow badgers an opportunity to continue to access areas to the east and south of the development area.

8.10 SNH has made no observation on this application on the basis that the applicant has already considered the impact on habitat and species and has proposed appropriate mitigation. It is not considered that this application would have a detrimental impact on habitat and species.

Construction Impacts and Control

8.11 The most sensitive receptors during construction will be nearby residents and the water environment within and directly adjacent to the site.

8.12 With regard to residential amenity, construction activity has potential to introduce an element of additional noise; particularly to properties to the north at Mid and Wester Dalziel. This is not however predicted to be above the thresholds of significance as set out within BS5228: Code of Practice for Noise and Vibration Control on Construction and Open Sites.

8.13 It is no longer considered suitable to control construction hours through planning conditions. Bespoke powers for regulating construction noise exist within the Control of Pollution Act 1974; powers which enable Environmental Health to specify working hours where problems exist. The applicant does however intend to follow best practice as set out within BS5228 and will require the appointed contractor to sign up to the ‘considerate contractor’ scheme.

8.14 In addition to noise, the applicant recognised within its submission for the enabling works application that there was potential for nuisance arising from dust and additional activity relating to transport. The impact with regard to both will be, in the main, short term. Measures to manage this were proposed in the enabling works application, including dust management and traffic management plan. These should be continued for the duration of work.

8.15 The closest watercourse is Rough Burn, located to the west of the main site access. This watercourse runs directly into the Moray Firth. A number of smaller watercourses, essentially field drainage features, which ultimately flow to the Moray Firth, exist within the vicinity of the development site. On the basis of the assessment undertaken for the enabling works application, the development is not anticipated to increase flood risk in the area. SEPA has accepted the applicant's findings on this. There should be no impact on the surrounding water courses subject to the implementation of good construction practice.

8.16 The applicant has committed to a number of mitigation measures relating to pollution prevention and good construction practice with the ES. These can be secured by condition requiring submission of a Construction Environmental Management Document (CEMD)/Construction Environmental Management Plans (CEMPs) to cover topics such as pollution management plan, soils management plan, drainage plan (to protect the water environment), dust management plan and traffic management plan as well as best practice guidance; for example on the storage of chemicals and fuel, wheel washing, workforce accommodation and drainage requirements etc. Subject to this, SEPA has no objection.

Operational Impacts and Control

8.17 Predicted operational impacts associated with the development are predominately related to the effects on air quality, noise and those resulting from transport requirements. In addition however, matters of drainage, both surface and foul, and chemical storage have been raised in the consideration of the application.

8.18 PAN 51 identifies that any consideration of the quality of land, air or water and the potential impacts arising from development, including those that may impact on health, is capable of being a material consideration insofar as these arise from land use. However, where a proposal requires a license under the Pollution Prevention and Control Regulations (PPC) advice is that planning authorities should accept that as suitable to ensure appropriate public health protection. The proposal will require a PPC licence. Accordingly emissions to land, air and water will be controlled by SEPA. Community Services - Environmental Health has confirmed that SEPA is the appropriate regulatory authority and as such has made no comment on the application.

8.19 Emissions to air are via the stack. Potential pollutants as a result of the proposal relate to NO_2, NOx, Particulate Matter (PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$) and formaldehyde. Associated with the operations are potential odours from volatile organic compounds (terpenes, pinenes and formaldehyde). Emissions to air from traffic have been screened out as not significant.

8.20 The assessment of the effect of emissions establishes that NO_2, PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$ may increase slightly but the overall effect when compared to the existing facility would have a negligible effect on air quality. Odour effects are considered to be significantly reduced but given that the facility will be producing greater quantities of product the effect is considered to be negligible overall. As far as is known, there are no current odour complaints. The OSB3 mill has be designed to minimise as far as possible the effects.

8.21 The applicant predicts that any increase in the daytime operational noise levels would be negligible but that night time levels would increase moderately at properties to the north; at Mid and Wester Dalziel. The assessment identifies that two buildings, Woodroom 2 (the existing Scotbark building) and Production Hall 1, are the most significant noise sources impacting on these receptors. The assessment does however also identify that noise levels can be mitigated to levels that are not significant through measures such as relocating plant within buildings, enclosure of plant inside the building and installation of absorption material to name a few. These measures would be brought forward through the PPC application.

8.22 SEPA has indicated that it is content with the principle of development of this type of facility, albeit that it will need to consider in detail the impacts as part of the PPC application.

8.23 Details for site drainage required for the new development were brought forward in the enabling works application. This considered arrangements for the building 'platform' and log yard. Run-off from the log yard will be channelled to a dry catch pit, a wet wedge pit, settlement ponds formed from concrete and a sand filter before a controlled discharge to the infiltration area. Flows from the expansion area will be directed to the north east where water infiltrates into the ground via a large soakaway. The existing site drainage system, where required, will be capable of linking into this.

8.24 With the range of treatment levels suggested, the proposals would appear to generally meet best practice SUDS guidance. SEPA requested that agreement on the finalised SUDS detail for the enabling works application should be sought through planning condition. It is not considered necessary impose this same condition on this permission.

8.25 In its initial response to the application, SEPA raised concern regarding arrangements for foul drainage. Currently a private system exists. SEPA had considered that a connection to the public system may be warranted. In response to this the applicant has clarified that there will be no substantive change to the demand for foul drainage but that in any case, details will be brought forward under the PPC. SEPA is content that there is sufficient space within the site to accommodate on-site arrangements. A connection to the public system has not however been discounted.

8.26 SEPA had also raised questions as to the adequacy of the plans to accommodate incident prevention and chemical and waste storage. The applicant has provided clarification on the level of fire water storage that will be available on site but no detailed proposals on chemical and waste storage. While SEPA is content that there is adequate space within the site to accommodate water storage, in the absence of detail it recommends a planning condition be attached to any grant of permission regarding chemical and waste storage. The applicant believes that this can be covered within the PPC licence rather than by condition. This is clearly not SEPA's view.

8.27 The increase in staff numbers during operation is unlikely to have a significant impact on the road network. All the same, the applicant has suggested that a Travel Plan will be implemented. The main transport effects through operation relate to HGV's transporting raw materials and finished products.

8.28 The increase in HGV movement at final operation is anticipated to be more than twice (inbound) from 107 as at 2015 to 221 in 2026. This would be primarily associated with timber delivery. It is easier to predict the effect of transportation of finished products than deliveries since the routes are well known. This is likely to increase the impact on local roads between the A9(T) and Inverness Harbour by two to three loads per hour; a level at which the operation of the road network could easily accommodate.

8.29 The assessment is less certain about the impact on the local road network from HGV movements associated with raw timber. There are two reasons for this. Firstly, that the origin of the timber is unknown and secondly, that it is difficult to know whether deliveries via those roads are bound for the site or being transported to other destinations.

8.30 While it is known to the Council that these deliveries place a strain on infrastructure, without evidence that this facility is the direct cause, and in the absence of any control of deliveries on the part of the applicant, it would not be appropriate to require the applicant to provide mitigation/financial contribution to the local road network. As identified within the response from Transport Planning a Good Practice Guide and Agreed Routes Maps for timber haulage exists. The guide and maps form the basis of the Timber Transport Forum's partnership approach to managing timber traffic. The applicant considers that this is the appropriate mitigation.

8.31 The Community Council response indicates that Norbord should consider transportation of goods via rail, asking that the applicant consider this within its plans; specifically the creation of a railway siding on this site. While this is a valid point to make and may assist in reducing HGV transport from the site, the applicant's assessment indicates that such increase in transport movements is unlikely to have an significant impact on the trunk and local road network. The matter has been raised with the applicant and may form part of its future plans. Neither Transport Scotland nor Transport Planning has raised an objection to the proposal on transport grounds.

Design, Landscape and Visual Impact

8.32 In terms of design, the proposal is at a concept design stage. The principal reason for this is that the process flow will have a large influence on how the elements of the mill relate to one another on the site. The final design will not be determined until the principal contractor has been appointed. Having said this, it is not anticipated that the final locations of the key elements indicated within the parameter plan will change significantly; it is more likely to be the detail. The applicant has submitted an impression of what could be achieved (Plan 8 - 12). In addition visualisations which indicate broad massing of the structures have been supplied (Plans 13 & 14).

8.33 Notwithstanding that the design is still at concept stage, consideration has been given to the layout and orientation of buildings. A number of iterations have been considered to try and balance the environmental and visual effects. For example, the initial site layout had the new heat plant and stack located within the southern section of the site, outwith the majority of other buildings on site. This would have meant that the stack would be highly visible from the A96(T). To address this, the stack and associated heat plant have been re-located to the northern section of the site, located between the existing Scotbark building and the new main plant building. This introduces an element of screening and provides for a more cohesive grouping of structures.

8.34 A challenge that the architects have had is determining what the appropriate architectural treatment is for such a range of separate structures of varying sizes that the proposal presents. To try and give a degree of unity, the concept design proposes the use of a similar design approach and material palette across all the new structures. The main elements of the buildings are to be clad in profiled metal sheet, a material commonly used in industrial building. However, in order to break down the scale of the building, this material is designed to be used in two primary colours located at key areas of the main façade. Use of semi translucent polycarbonate to create the illusion of voids in the areas between the different metal coloured panels is suggested also.

8.35 It needs to be recognised that this is a concept and may be subject to change. It is however an appropriate response to such a large industrial facility that is relatively isolated in the landscape. An effort has been made to design the scheme as a whole rather than let it to grow organically. It is considered that this concept should be carried forward into the final design. To this end it is suggested that the final positioning, layout and design of buildings within each Phase shall be controlled by condition.

8.36 With regard to where the proposal fits within the landscape, it is situated in a generally low lying area but back-clothed to the south by the Black Isle and Ross-shire mountains beyond and from the north the Culloden ridge. The existing factory complex is an isolated industrial feature in this landscape, located within one of the key transport routes within Highland. Visibility is generally high, even at distance; albeit that is more related to the distinctive plume.

8.37 The proposal will considerably extend the scale of the existing complex and for a short period two stacks will be evident in views. However, the most significant effects of the development would generally be restricted to the immediate surroundings. The landscaping setting and character will not be affected; only the visual impact resulting from the increase in scale of development. Even then, this must be considered within the current context of a factory complex within the site.

8.38 Landscaping, which has already been agreed and conditioned as part of the enabling works application, and the likelihood of a realigned A96(T) taking a more southerly route may assist in the longer term of reducing the effect for these road users. It will still however remain a significant feature at close quarter. This visibility makes it even more important that the final design is of high quality. The concept design that the applicant has developed is considered to achieve this and would be expected to be brought forward along with careful consideration on the effects of light at night time.

Historic Environment

8.39 There are no Scheduled Monuments or Listed Buildings within the site boundary. No part of the application area lies within a Conservation Area, Historic Battlefield or Garden and Designed Landscape. There are also no records of any other archaeological historic environment sites within the site boundary.

8.40 The potential for previously unrecorded archaeological remains on the site has been considered under the enabling works application. Mitigation, through archaeological monitoring of the topsoil removal, has been identified and will be expected to be implemented.

8.29 The effect of the development on the historic environment is essentially related to the visual impact, including visibility from key receptors such as Castle Stuart and Dalcross Castle; albeit to different extents given that the former is less than 1km from the site. On the basis that the current mill is already a feature of the baseline, the applicant considers that the development would have an impact that is of minor significance. Historic Scotland agrees with the applicant's assessment and therefore has no objection. This is also the case for the Council's Historic Environment Team.

Any other material considerations

8.30 The Community Council response indicates that Norbord should consider transportation of goods via rail, asking that the applicant consider this within its plans; specifically the creation of a railway siding on this site. While this is a valid point to make and may assist in reducing HGV transport from the site, the increase in transport movements is not such to create an impact on the trunk and local road network. it is not relevant to this particular application as this does not form part of the proposal. It is however, something that has been raised with the applicant and may form part of its future plans.

Any non-material considerations

8.31 None.

Matters to be secured by Section 75 Agreement

8.32 None.

9.0 CONCLUSION

9.1 This proposal represents a considerable investment within the Highlands that would not only safeguard existing jobs but create significant additional employment opportunities related to creation of substantially higher volumes of product. It will provide for a more sustainable and efficient modern plant, the result of which will enable this product to be produced without further significant impact to the ground, air and water environment. As regulator of these aspects of the proposal, SEPA accepts the principle of the development.

9.2 The proposal will increase the visual presence of what is already a relatively prominent isolated industrial complex in the landscape to a significant degree. However, cognisance has been taken of this fact within the concept design proposals, particularly the location of plant and buildings on the site and the need to create visual unity between the various buildings and their finishes. The success of the building fitting into the landscape and minimising adverse visual impact rests with this mitigation.

9.3 The Development Plan allocates the land for development related to the existing timber board manufacturing/processing. There is therefore clear support in principle for this development. Indeed planning permission has been secured for the enabling works. There are no significant constraints to the development proposed. Subject to appropriate mitigation, which can be controlled by condition, or more appropriately under the PPC licence, the development would accord with the development plan. There are no material considerations that indicate otherwise.

10.0 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

Reason: n/a

Subject to the above, it is recommended the application be **GRANTED** subject to the following conditions and reasons:

1. For the avoidance of doubt, the buildings and plant hereby approved shall be constructed and operated in accordance with the provisions of the application, the submitted plans, and the Environmental Statement. All plant and buildings shall be positioned as shown on Plan UK12 19702 2 Rev 1 dated July 2014, hereby approved, subject to a 30m micro-siting allowance, the final location of which shall be submitted to, and approved in writing, by the Planning Authority.

   Reason: In order to clarify the terms of the permission while allowing a degree of flexibility in the final positioning of the plant but retaining control of the overall impact on design and visual amenity.

2. No development, above ground level, shall commence within each Phase until full details of the layout, scale, massing, external materials and colours of all plant, equipment, and buildings hereby approved has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Planning Authority. For the avoidance of doubt, the maximum built height of any element of the proposal hereby approved shall not exceed those heights stated on Plan UK12 19702 2 Rev 1 dated July 2014. The development shall proceed in accordance with the approved details.

   Reason: In order to retain control over the layout and final design of all above ground structures within the site in the interest of visual amenity.

3. No development shall start within each Phase of the development until a Construction Environmental Management Document has been submitted to, and agreed in writing by, the Planning Authority in consultation with SEPA. The Document shall include:

   - An updated Schedule of Mitigation (SM) including all mitigation proposed in support of the planning application and contained within the Environmental Statement

   - Processes to control / action changes from the agreed Schedule of Mitigation.

   - Processes for informing neighbouring residents, potentially with involvement of the Community Council, of the work programme and likely significant events such as delivery and placing of concrete and working hours.

   - The following site specific Construction and Environmental Management Plans (CEMP) as required;

     i. pollution prevention plan
     ii. chemical pollution plan
     iii. waste management plan
     iv. dust mitigation plan
     v. noise mitigation plan
     vi. water run-off management plan
     vii. construction traffic management plan

- Details of any methods of monitoring, auditing, reporting and communication of environmental management on site with the client, Planning Authority and other relevant parties.

- Statement of any additional persons responsible for 'stopping the job / activity' if in potential breach of a mitigation or legislation occurs.

Unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Planning Authority the development shall proceed in accordance with the agreed Document.

Reason: To protect the environment from the construction and operation of the development.

4. No development shall commence on each Phase until full details of any chemical storage and waste storage facilities for that Phase, or the development as a whole as may be the case, shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Planning Authority in consultation with SEPA.

Reason: In order to ensure that there is adequate space within the development to accommodate such requirements without impacting on the design and layout of buildings.

5. No development shall commence on each Phase until details of all external lighting, including siting, alignment and illumination, shall be submitted to, and approved in writing, by the Planning Authority. Only the approved details shall be implemented.

Reason: In the interest of amenity.

6. The operator shall ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable through contract, that timber suppliers are adhering to the Timber Transport Forum's Good Practice Guide and utilising Agreed Routes Maps for timber haulage.

Reason: In the interest of reducing timber transport to the site via roads on the local network less suitable to carry timber freight.

7. Where the construction works involve the use of cranes, the developer shall notify HIAL of the intention to commence construction a minimum of 10 days prior to works starting on site. The notification shall include the description of crane operations, including maximum heights of any plant to be used.

Reason: So as not to infringe on the safeguarding surfaces for Inverness Airport in the interest of air safety.

REASON FOR DECISION

The proposals accord with the provisions of the Development Plan and there are no material considerations which would warrant refusal of the application.

Signature:

Designation:	Head of Planning and Building Standards
Case Officer:	David Mudie, Team Leader - Development Management
Background Papers:	Highland wide Local Development Plan, Inverness Local Plan
Relevant Plans:	UK12 19702 1 - 5.

Legend

- Site Boundary
- Expansion Area

N

Figure 1.1 - Site Location

OSB3 Inverness
Environmental Statement

Norbord Ltd

Date	Drawn by
July 2014	CP
Project No. UK12_19702	Issue 1
Drawing ref.:	

ENVIRON

7 Walker Street, Edinburgh EH3 7JY

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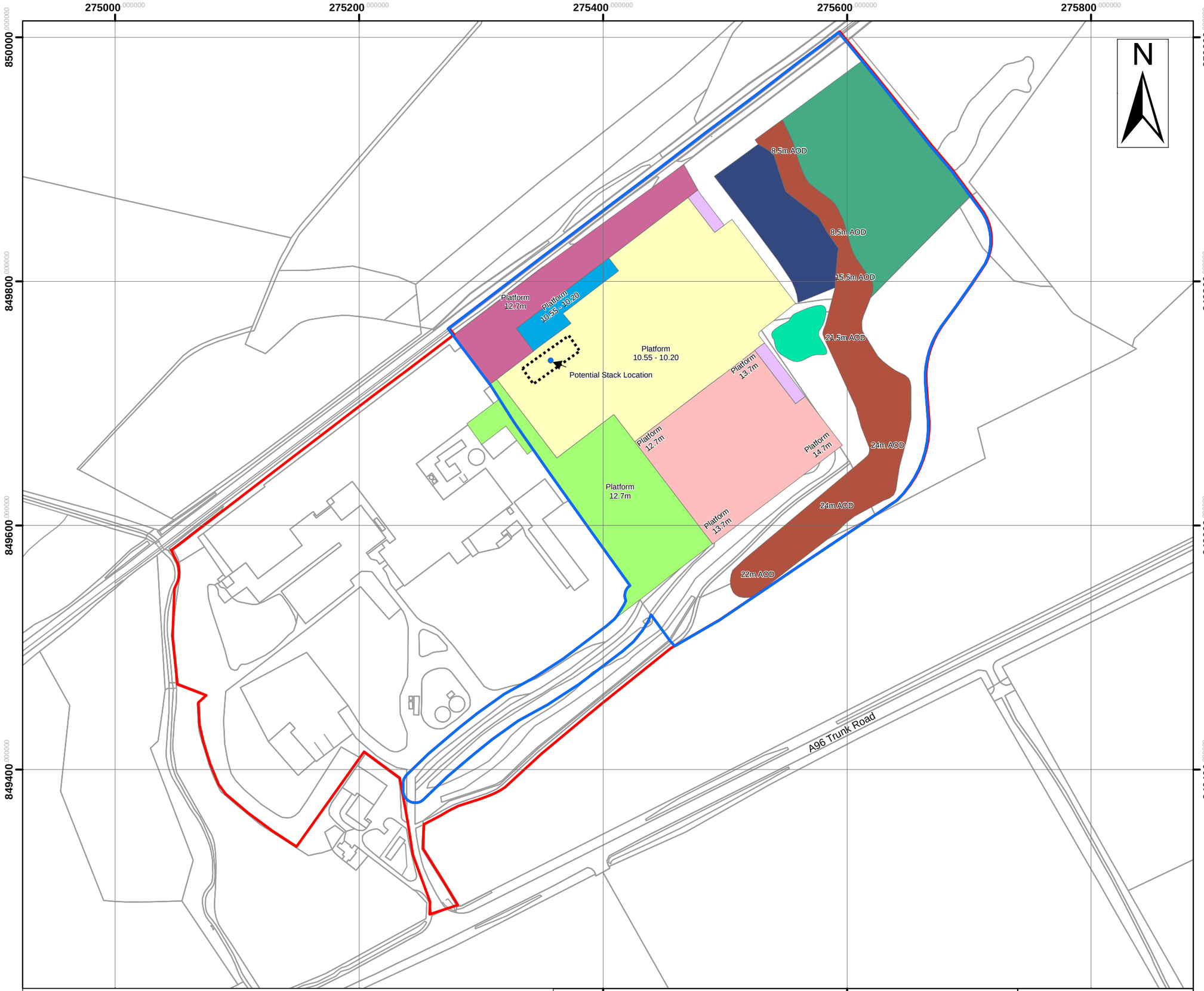

Legend

- Site Boundary
- Expansion Area
- Proposed parameter Block Height for Existing Building Area and New Plant 33m AOD. Platfrom Level 12.7m AOD
- Proposed Log Parameter Block Height for Log Storage Yard 20m AOD. Platform Level 12.7m - 14.7m AOD
- Proposed Parameter Block for New Building 22m AOD. Platform Level 10.2m - 10.55m AOD
- Proposed Parameter Block for New Buildings 22m AOD. Platform Level 12.7m AOD
- Proposed Parameter Block for New Buildings and Plant 45m AOD. Platform Level 10.2m - 10.55m AOD
- Stack
- Ramp
- Stack Limit of Deviation 51.4m AOD
- Bund
- Habitat Management Area
- Infiltration Area
- Wetland Area

Scale @ A3 1:3,000

Figure 2.1 - Parameter Plan Layout

OSB3 Inverness
Environmental Statement

Norbord Ltd

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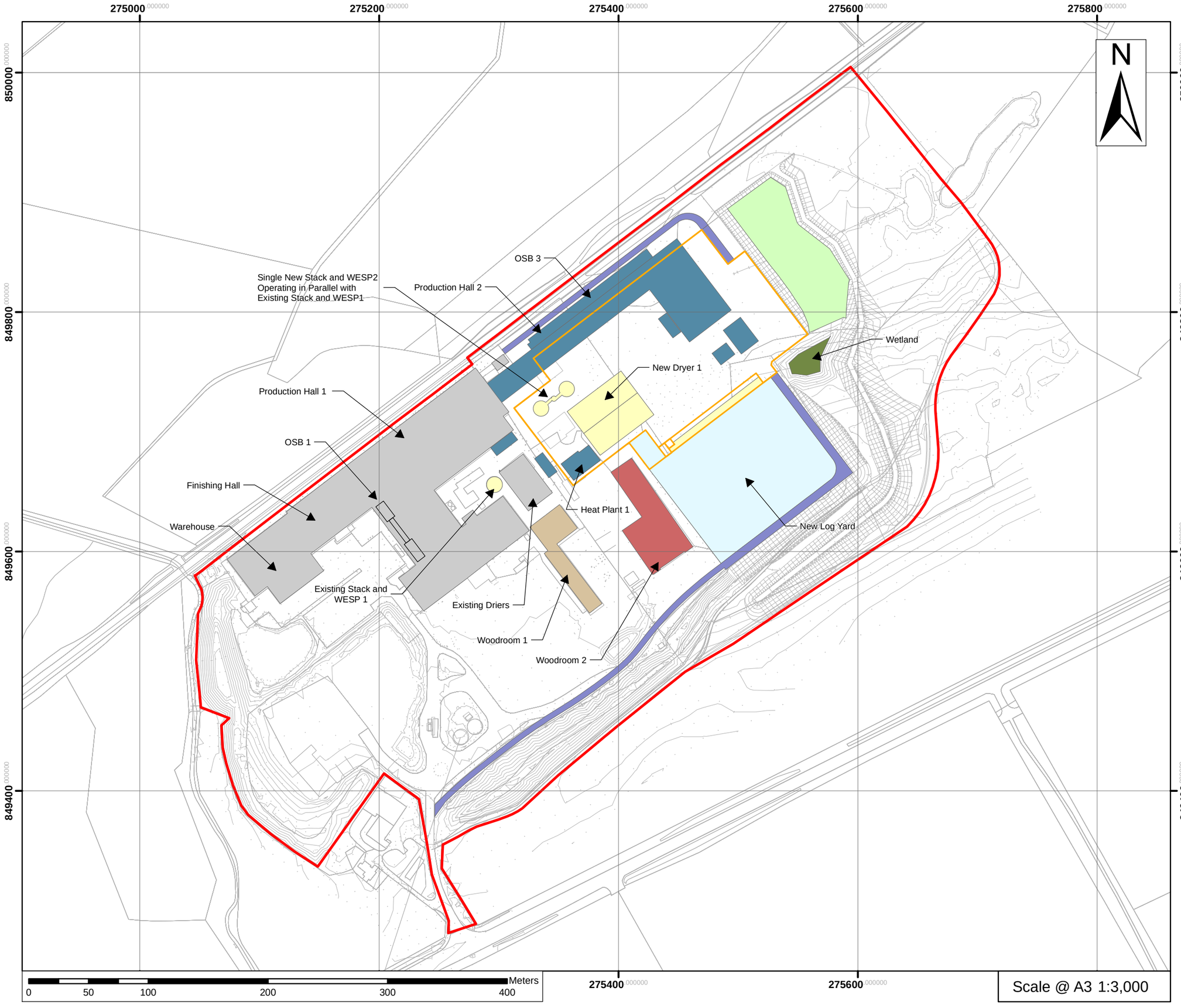

Legend

- Site Boundary
- Existing Buildings
- Infiltration Area
- New Log Yard
- New Retaining Wall
- Plant Equipment\Other
- Proposed New Buildings
- Wetland
- Upgraded Road
- Woodroom 1
- Woodroom 2

Figure 2.3 - Phase 1 Operating Condition

OSB3 Inverness
Environmental Statement

Norbord Ltd

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July 2014	CO
Project No. UK12_19702	Issue 1

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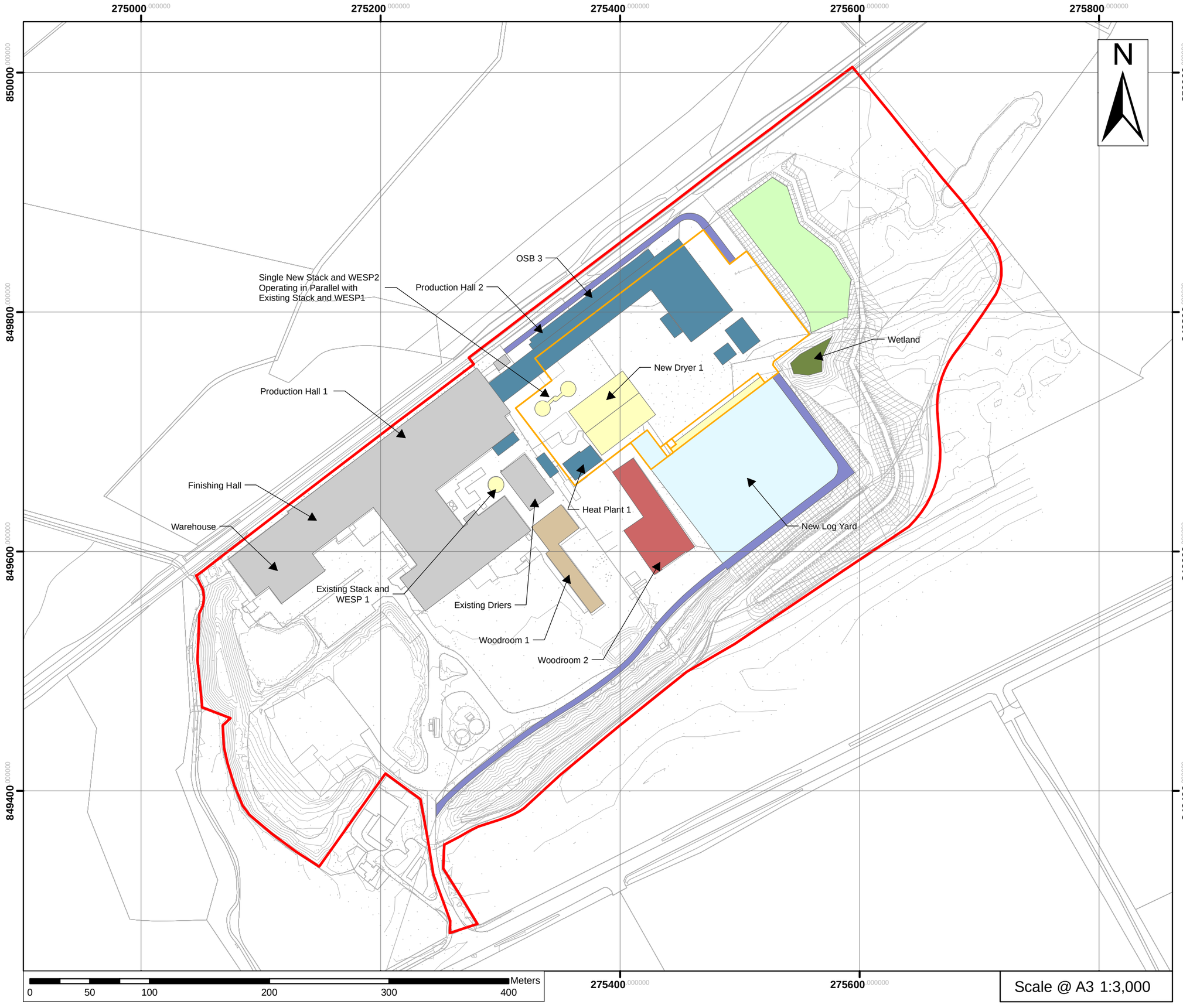

Legend

- Site Boundary
- Existing Buildings
- Infiltration Area
- New Log Yard
- New Retaining Wall
- Plant Equipment\Other
- Proposed New Buildings
- Wetland
- Upgraded Road
- Woodroom 1
- Woodroom 2

Figure 2.4 - Phase 2 Operating Condition

OSB3 Inverness
Environmental Statement

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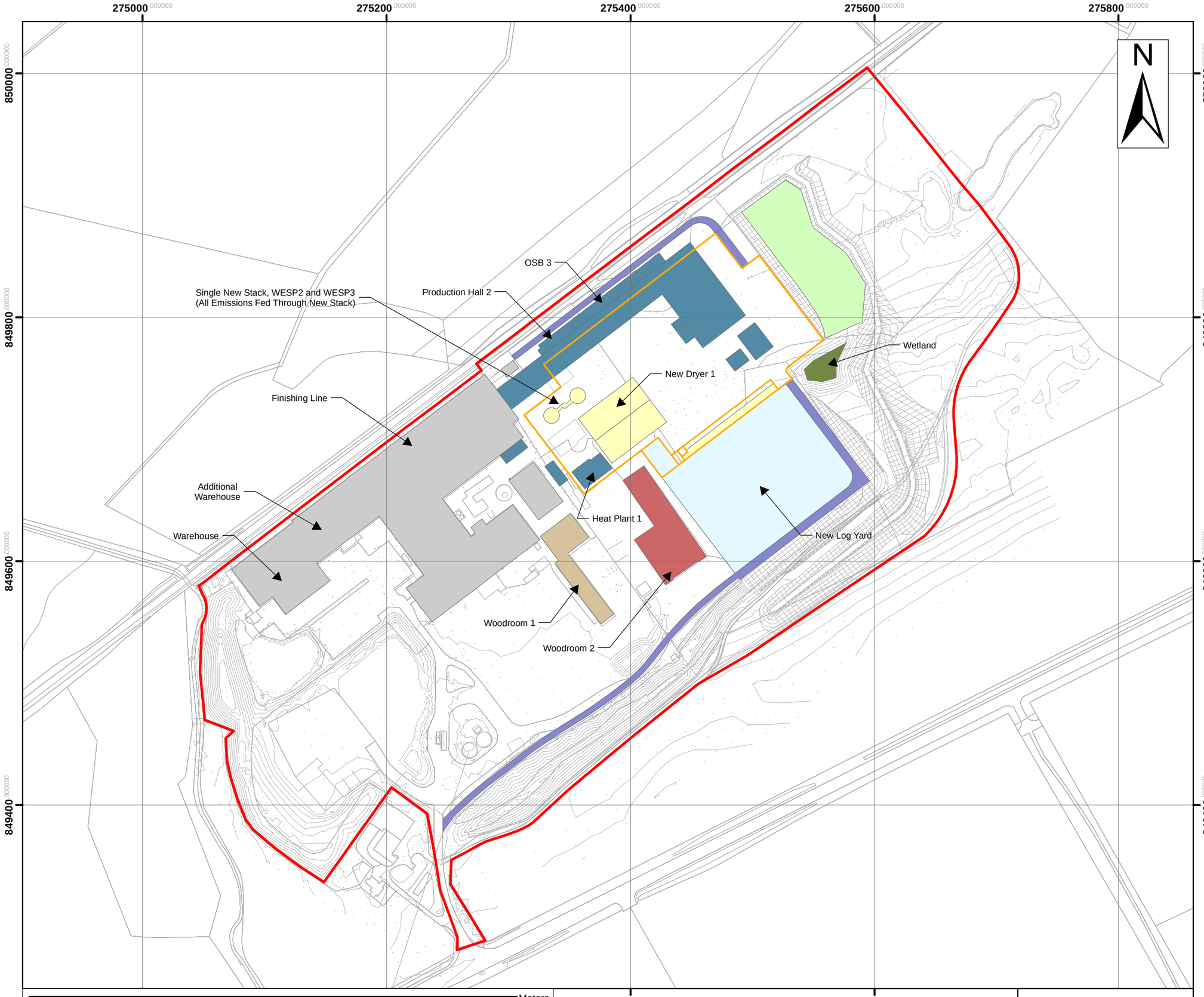

Legend

- Site Boundary
- Existing Buildings
- Infiltration Area
- New Log Yard
- New Retaining Wall
- Plant Equipment\Other
- Proposed New Buildings
- Wetland
- Upgraded Road
- Woodroom 1
- Woodroom 2

Figure 2.5 - Phase 3 Operating Condition

OSB3 Inverness
Environmental Statement

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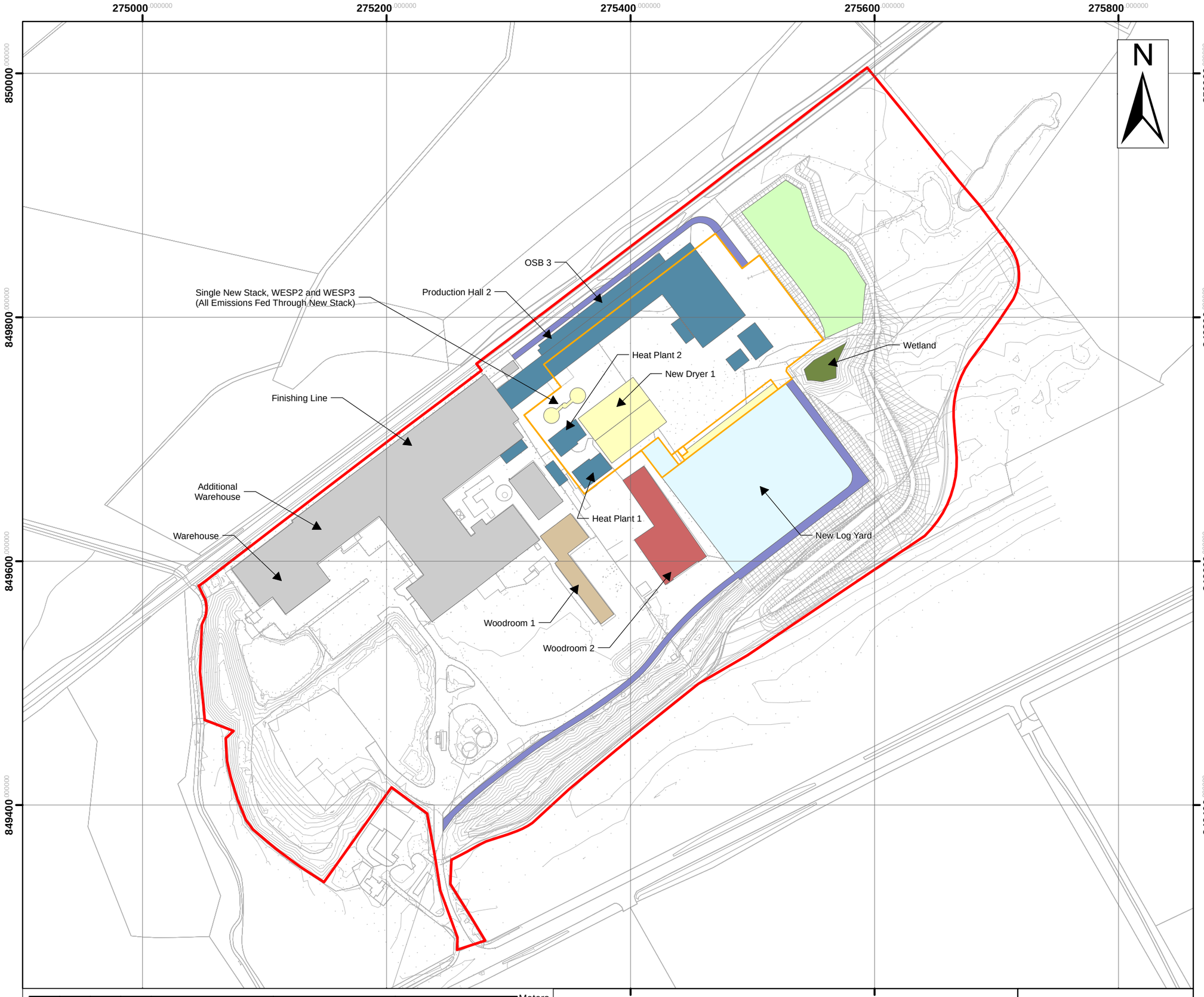

Legend

- Site Boundary
- Existing Buildings
- Infiltration
- New Log Yard
- New Retaining Wall
- Plant Equipment\Other
- Proposed New Buildings
- Wetland
- Upgraded Road
- Woodroom 1
- Woodroom 2

Figure 2.6 - Phase 4 Operating Condition

OSB3 Inverness
Environmental Statement

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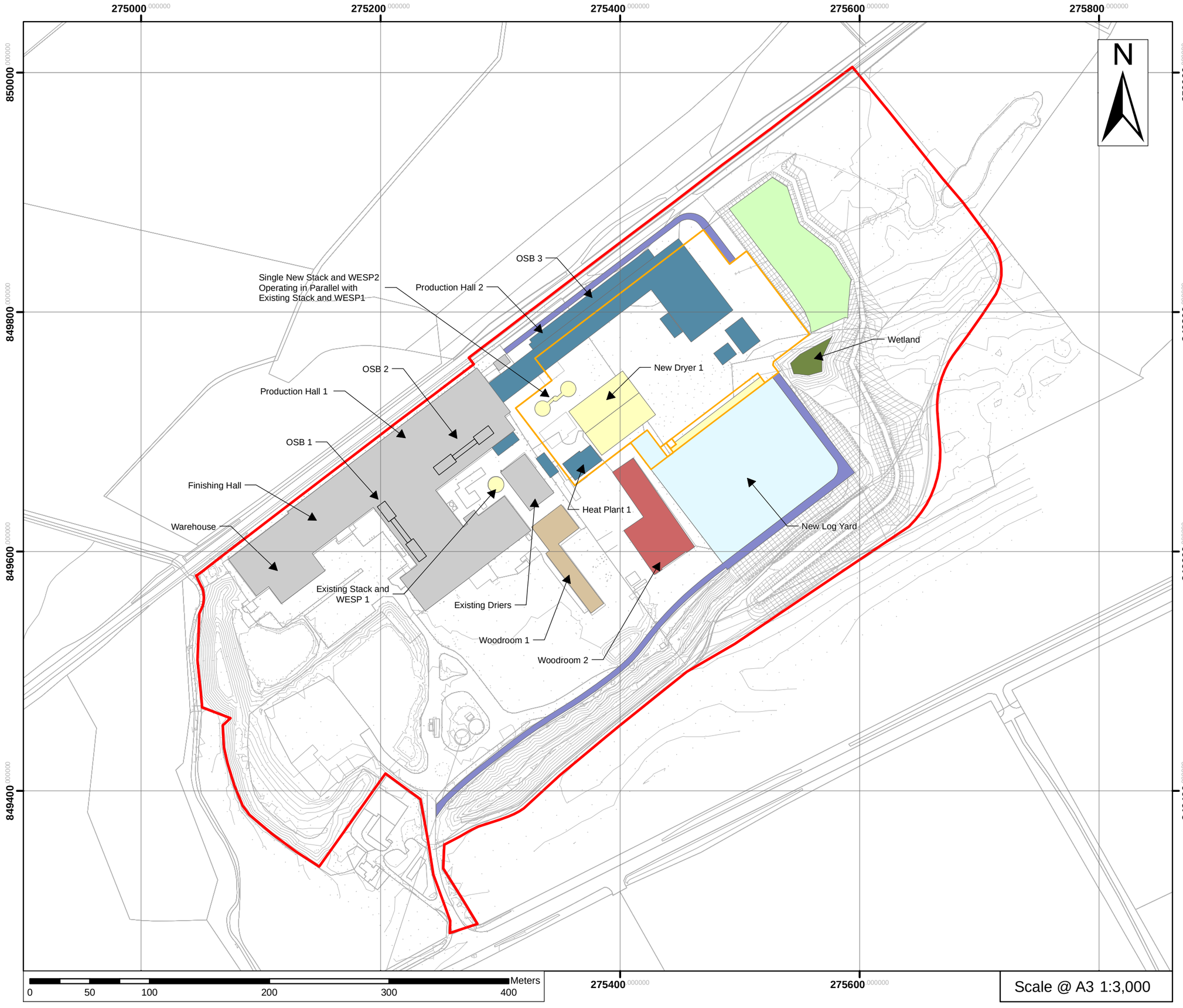

Legend

- Site Boundary
- Existing Buildings
- Infiltration Area
- New Log Yard
- New Retaining Wall
- Plant Equipment\Other
- Proposed New Buildings
- Wetland
- Upgraded Road
- Woodroom 1
- Woodroom 2

Figure 2.7 - Worst Case Scenario

OSB3 Inverness
Environmental Statement

Norbord Ltd

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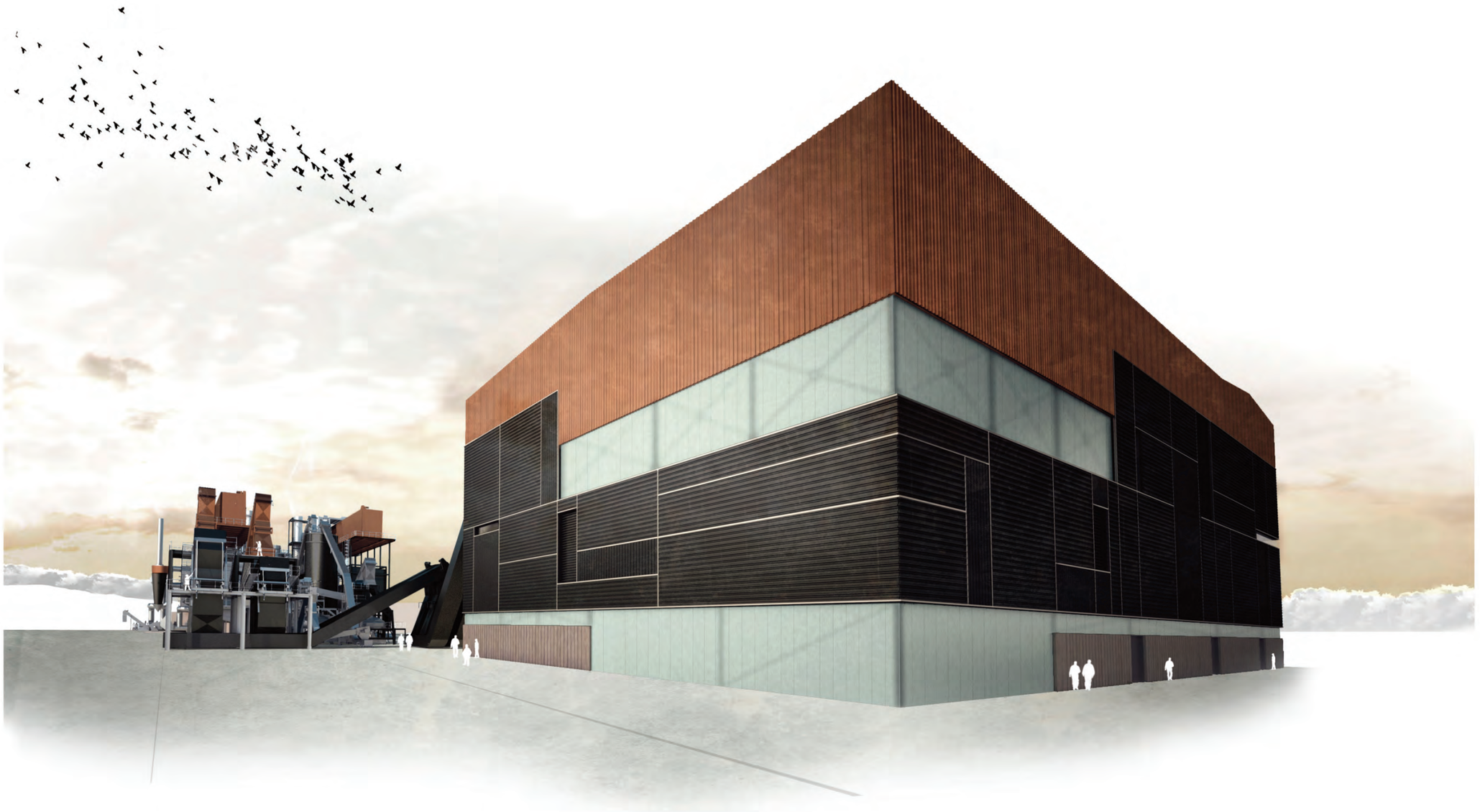
Concept elevation 1

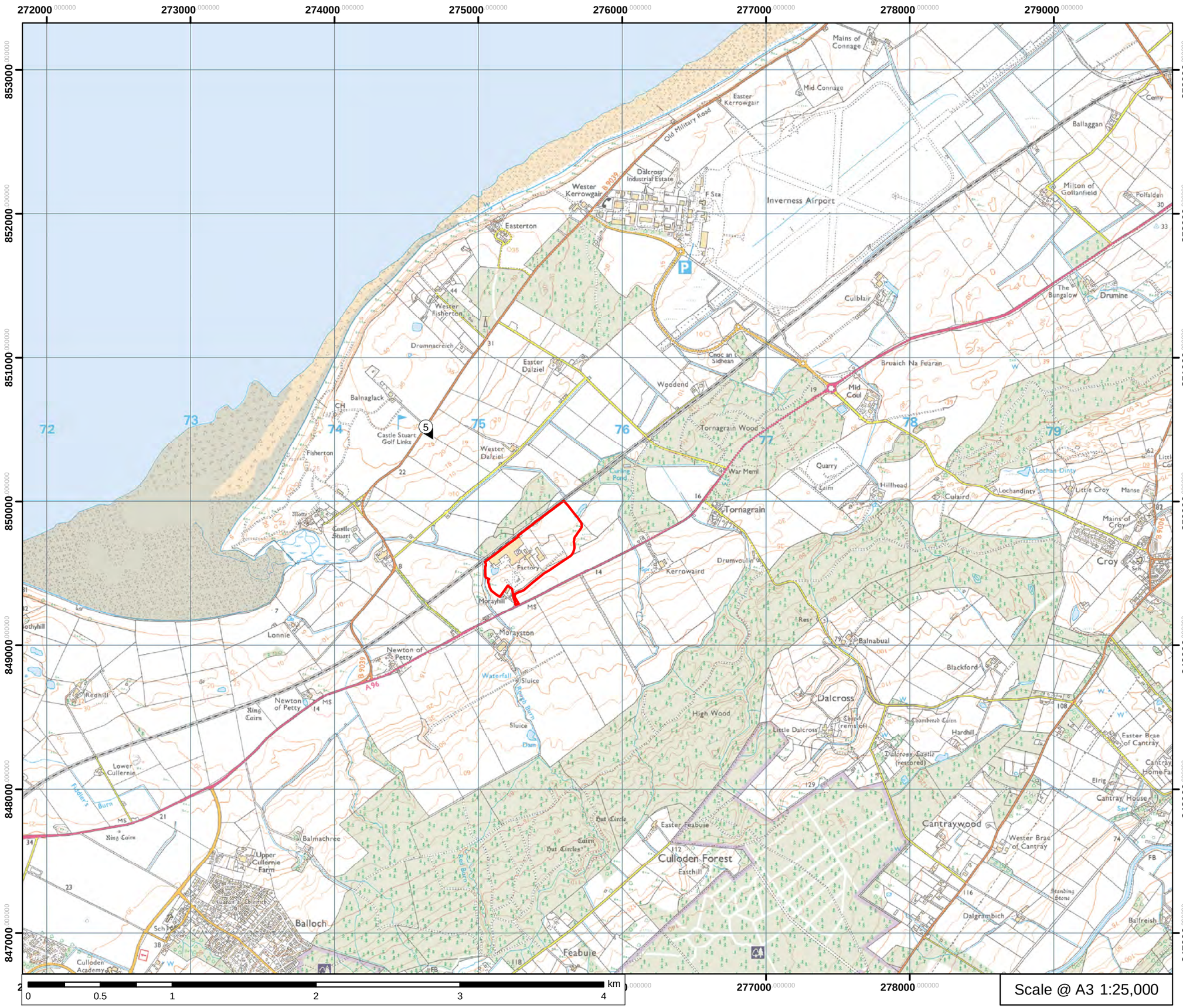
Concept elevation 2

Perspective view 1

Perspective view 2



Perspective view 3



Scale @ A3 1:25,000

Legend

Site Boundary

Viewpoint Location

Viewpoint Coordinates
274634, 850518

Approximate Viewing Distance
300mm

Field of View Represented in Visualisation
67 degrees

Distance to Site
990m

N

Figure 7.9a - Viewpoint 5
Castle Stuart Golf Links

OSB3 Inverness
Environmental Statement

Norbord Ltd

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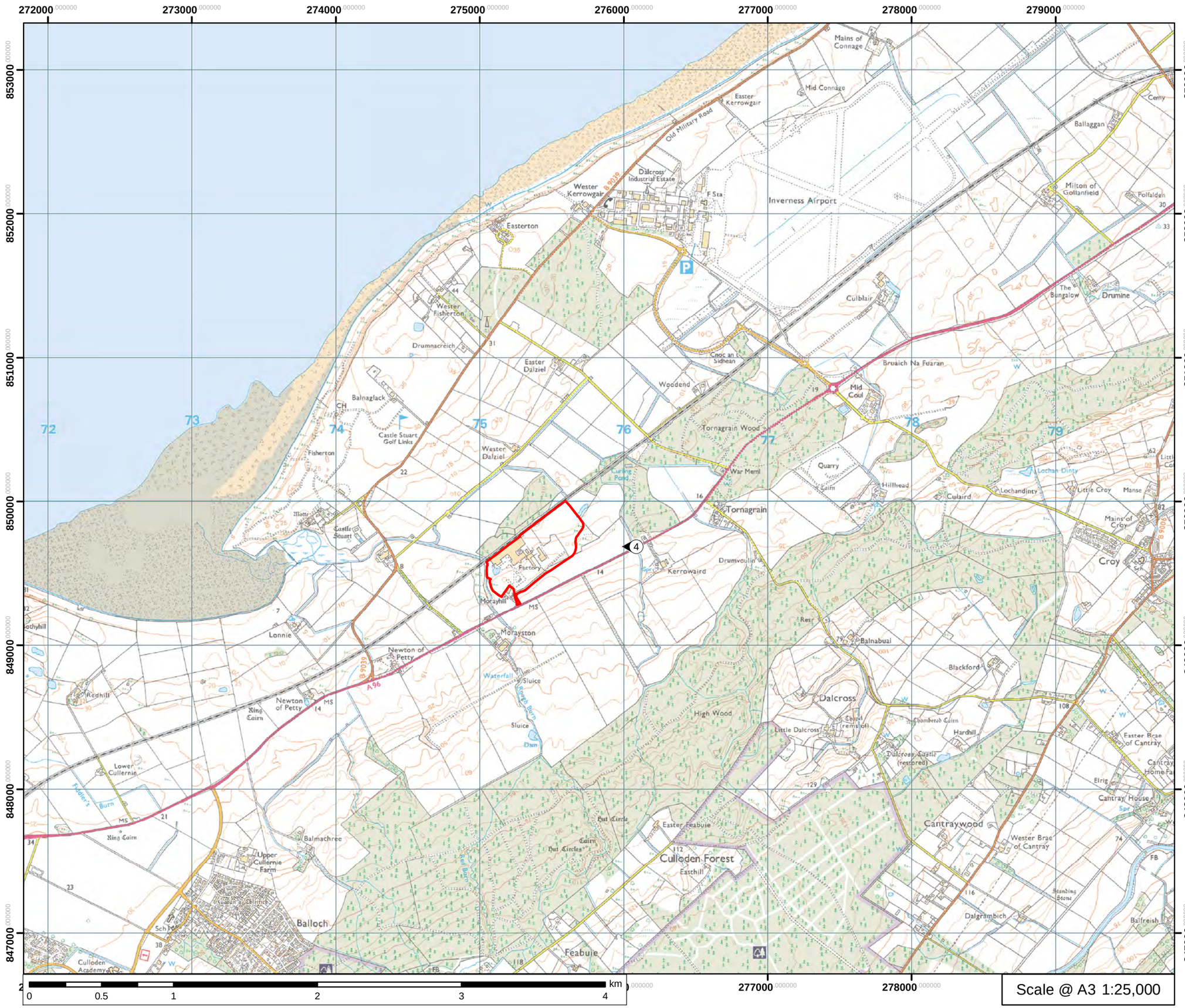
Existing View

Visualisation of Proposal



Legend

Site Boundary

Viewpoint Location

Viewpoint Coordinates

276088, 849685

Approximate Viewing Distance

300mm

Field of View Represented in Visualisation

67 degrees

Distance to Site

396m

N

Scale @ A3 1:25,000

Figure 7.8a - Viewpoint 4
A96 East Newton

OSB3 Inverness
Environmental Statement

Norbord Ltd

Date	Drawn by
July 2014	CO
Project No. UK12_19702	Issue 1
Drawing ref.:	

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Existing View

Visualisation of Proposal