THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

SOUTH PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE – 1 March 2016

Agenda Item	6.8
Report	PLS
No	018/16

15/03910/MSC & 15/03911/LBC: Robertson Homes Ltd

Westercraigs, Inverness

Report by Head of Planning and Building Standards

SUMMARY

Description: Change of use and renovation of former hospital to form 56 residential units.

Recommendation: APPROVE Matters Specified in Conditions and GRANT Listed

Building Consent

Ward: 14 - Inverness West

Development category: Local

Pre-determination hearing: None

Reason referred to Committee: More than 5 objections and objection from Statutory

Consultee.

1. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 1.1 These applications, for listed building consent and matters specified in conditions imposed on the outline planning permission for the development of 550 houses on land associated with the former hospital at Craig Dunain, Inverness, relate to the re-development of the undeveloped part of the Craig Dunain listed building, known as Site 3, to form 56 housing units.
- 1.2 The proposal is to form 30 flats (2 and 3 bed), 24 townhouses (2-4 beds) and 2 terraced houses. The ground floor flats and houses will have private garden space. Communal landscape areas will extend beyond this private space. Car parking for 113 cars is provided within a parking courtyard accessed from the distributor road that passes the west side of the building. Within the car parking areas will be areas for the storage of communcal recycling bins and bikes.
- 1.3 The building is to be re-developed in two further phases; the first phase, for 12 flats, having already been completed. Phase 3b is to be developed in tandem with proposals for new build on Sites 5 and 11 to the south and west of the building. Phase 3c will be built out at the same time as Sites 6,7 and 8, which sit to the north and west of the building, are developed.

- 1.4 It is not proposed to redevelop the fire-damaged central area of the building in which the former chapel, with its ornate tracery stonework, was situated. Instead, the architect proposes to remove what remains of the rear wall and infill the basement to improve the daylighting available to the town house proposed to the rear, create a courtyard that reflects the original function of the space, and allow for pedestrian permeability of what is a long façade. Part of the chapel façade will be retained as a feature. The proposal has been amended to reinstate roof structures to the towers on either side of this central area.
- 1.5 Where modern extensions or alterations are/have been removed and the damage to the stonework is beyond economic repair, the proposal is to apply a render to the elevation. In some elevations it will be necessary to form windows from door openings and vice versus. These will be formed in stone to match. For fire separation reasons some windows will require to be blocked up and a render finish applied. These are in general not on principal elevations. Where there are larger areas of repairs, or glazing, on principal elevations the use of a more contemporary glazing and zinc combination is proposed.
- 1.6 Many of the original windows remain in the building but these are generally in a poor state of repair. Other windows have been retained and remain in storage. Where it is not practical or economically viable to re-use existing windows, the proposal is to replace existing windows with new double glazed painted sash and casement windows. Slate roofs will be repaired. No details of proposed replacement rain water goods have been submitted.
- 1.7 The landscape design for the project has been inspired by the story of Angus McPhee, one time resident and weaver of grass and introduces this theme through use of interweaving low stone walls and footpaths.
- 1.8 All units will be connected to the existing public sewer and supply. Surface water is to be treated via the existing SuDS infrastructure discharging to the established SuDS pond to the west of the main Leachkin Road entrance to the site.
- 1.9 **Variations**: The proposal has been amended to remove timber fencing within gardens and replace them with beech hedges and to reinstate roof structures to the towers that sit within the central core of the building. The arboriculture assessment and method statement have been revised to address the comments of the Forestry Officer.

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The site is the former Craig Dunain hospital building situated on the south west edge of Inverness on a south east facing slope below Craig Dunain hill to the west of the A82. The building faces Inverness.
- 2.2 The building is Category B listed. The main block of the hospital building is dated 1864. This was added to, with new wings and entrance block, in 1901. It is a 2/3 storey building with 45 bays, gable wings and both square and circular towers. It is constructed of rubble with tooled and polished ashlar Tarradale sandstone dressings and a slate roof. Windows are a mixture of 12 pane and two pane sliding

sash and casement type windows although some modern windows are evident.

3. PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 **09.08.2005** Outline Planning Permission for residential development and associated infrastructure based upon submitted Master Plan (as amended) (550 houses) granted (03/00676/OUTIN).
- 3.2 **09.06.2006** Matters Specified in Conditions application for redevelopment of listed building to form 118 flats approved (05/00879/REMIN).
- 3.3 **09.06.2006** Listed Building Consent for redevelopment of listed building to form 45 flats granted (05/00891/LBCIN).
- 3.4 **06.05.2008** Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent for refurbishment of former hospital to form 32 apartments (Phase 1) granted (07/01169/FULIN & 07/01172/LBCIN).
- 3.5 **22.07.2009** Application for non-compliance with Condition 14 of 03/00676/OUTIN granted (08/00657/FULIN).
- 3.6 **22.01.2009** Planning permission and listed building consent for refurbishment of former hospital to form 54 apartments (Phase 2) granted (08/00670/FULIN & 08/00671/LBCIN).

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

4.1 Advertised: Unknown Neighbour

Representation deadline: 21.01.2016

Timeous representations: 13 in respect of MSC and 3 in respect of LBC

Late representations: 1 for LBC

- 4.2 Material considerations raised are summarised as follows:
 - Removal of central section of the building unacceptable
 - Pyramidal roof structures on towers should be reinstated
 - Lack of recreation space/play areas
- 4.3 Non-material considerations raised are summarised as follows:
 - Developer hasn't satisfied existing conditions
 - Developer must improve local road network and west drive
- 4.4 All letters of representation are available for inspection via the Council's eplanning portal which can be accessed through the internet www.wam.highland.gov.uk/wam.

5. CONSULTATIONS

- Inverness West Community Council consider that it will be a great advantage to the area to have this building restored and brought back into use however, the Community Council consider that the loss of the prominent central towers and roof structures would not preserve the character of the building. In addition, the Community Council considers that there is inadequate provision for recreation, particularly for younger children.
- 5.2 **Transport Planning Team** highlight that until the distributor road is adopted that access to the development will remain private. The initial response commented on confusion over the number of parking spaces to be provided. This is now clarified. No issues relating to road safety have been raised.
- 5.3 **Historic Environment Team**: No response received.
- 5.4 **Forestry Team**: No objection.
- 5.5 **Historic Scotland** has no objection to the proposal but does ask whether, as the development progresses, there might be the possibility of restoring the central fire damaged part of the building.

6. DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICY

- 6.1 The development plan comprises of the Highland Wide Local Development Plan (2012), the Inner Moray Firth Local Plan (2015) and Statutory Supplementary Guidance.
- 6.2 The following policies are relevant to the assessment of the application:

Highland Wide Local Development Plan 2012

6.3	Policy 28	Sustainable Design
Policy s	Policy 29	Design Quality and Place Making
	Policy 56	Travel
	Policy 57	Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage

Inner Moray Firth Local Plan 2015

6.4 IN20 Westercraigs

7. OTHER MATERIAL POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

7.1 Open Space
Highland Historic Environment Strategy

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. The Development Plan in this case is the Highland wide Local Development Plan and the Inner Moray Firth Development Plan.
- 8.2 Section 14 of the Planning (Listed Buildlings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 places a duty on planning authorities to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Determining Issues

- 8.3 The determining issues are:
 - Do the proposals preserve the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest? If they do not there is a presumption against the granting of planning permission.
 - Do the proposals comply with the development plan? If they do, are there any compelling reasons for not approving them? If they do not, are there any compelling reasons for approving them?

Assessment

8.4 In order to address the determining issues, Committee must consider whether the proposal a) is acceptable in principle, b) is of a standard sufficient to preserve the character of the listed building or any features of architectural or historic interest that it possesses, c) would provide a good standard of amenity, and d) raises any other material planning issues.

Principle

- 8.5 The site is identified within the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan (IN20) for development in accordance with planning permission 03/00676/OUTIN. A key policy consideration is the need to secure redevelopment of the listed building.
- 8.6 Planning permission was granted in June 2006 for the redevelopment of the listed hospital building to form 181 apartments. At the same time Listed Building Consent was granted for the initial Phase 1, the central core, comprising 45 units.
- 8.7 The expectation was to develop the central core and then the wings as subsequent phases that would be subject to detailed listed building applications. However, this could not be implemented as a result of the fire in late 2007 that completely destroyed the central section of the building. Given this set back, Robertson Homes Ltd amended its plans with a submission to develop 32 units in the west wing and bring this forward as its first phase. This was granted in May 2008. 12 of these units were completed, and are now occupied, although the economic

downturn has meant that the remaining 20 were not progressed.

- 8.8 The more recent increase in activity in the housing market and a realisation that a significant investment in the listed building would be required to capitalise on this has led the applicant to reconsider its plans for the building. A total number of 68 flats are now proposed to be developed within the building, a substantial reduction from the 118 originally envisaged. With the cost of the redevelopment of the building spread over a fewer number of units, the applicant considers it necessary to develop the proposal in tandem with new build housing within adjacent sites. Phase 1, now known as Site 3a is complete (12 units). Site 3b (25 units) is to be developed concurrently with Sites 5 and 11 and Site 3c (31 units) will follow on and be redeveloped along with Sites 6, 7 and 8. This allows exceptional costs associated with conversion of the listed building to be, to some extent at least, absorbed by development on other parts of the site.
- 8.9 The principle of development has been accepted on this site. The proposal, as currently submitted, would appear to be deliverable and therefore the future of the building is likely to be secured as required by Development Plan policy. Providing that the proposal has no significant detrimental impact on individual or community amenity and it respects the historic environment then the proposal would comply with the Development Plan.

Character of the Listed Building

- 8.10 The impact of the fire on the central part of the building has had a substantial influence on the current proposal. The applicant proposes not to rebuild the rear walls or roof of the central section of the building where the chapel once stood. While cost is considered one reason for this, the architect indicates within the supporting design and access statement that there is also a clear design rationale.
- 8.11 Not reinstating the chapel and infilling the basement provides an opportunity to improve the daylight available to the town houses proposed to the rear and increase pedestrian permeability by the creation of a courtyard that reflects the original function of the space as a meeting place. The space would not have been suitable for conversion to residential use and while alternative uses could have been considered these would have compromised the amenity of the town houses at the rear.
- 8.12 The fire is now part of the history of this building too and, in this regard, the decision not to rebuild the chapel could be considered an honest response to that unfortunate event. Having said that, the application has been amended to reinstate roof structures to the towers on either side of this central area. This is in direct response to the comments received from third parties. From a distance at least the important architectural features of the façade would be retained.
- 8.13 The alterations proposed to doors and window openings are necessary and appropriate to enable conversion into residential use. The use of render on areas where original stonework cannot be economically repaired and on blocked up windows is similarly appropriate. This has worked well on Phase 3a. While there is an expectation that some windows will be capable of re-use with repairs, it is

likely that most will have to be replaced in some form or another. Futher consideration of this will however be required and can be controlled by condition. Subject to quality workmanship, and the conditions proposed, the alterations will maintain the character of the building.

8.14 Historic Scotland, although perhaps hopeful that there may be scope for the central part of the building to be restored as the development progresses, has not objected to the proposal. This suggests that the proposal, a compromise while it may be, would preserve the building and the key features of special architectural or historic interest.

Amenity

- 8.15 The creation of 68 properties in a space originally intended for 118 units has dramatically improved the quality of space available to prospective purchasers. There are now no one bedroomed flats proposed. All flats will be dual aspect and the majority of properties will have private garden ground. The associated reduction in parking spaces over previous proposals also improves the immediate environment of the building while still meeting with the Council's parking standards.
- 8.16 The proposals include more formalised open space, mainly to the front of the listed building, the landscape design for which draws its inspiration from the history of the site. This is considered to be of a high standard appropriate to the setting of the building. Formal recreation/child play facilities are not suitable for this location. Other areas exist within the wider site for these, such as on the 'green wedge' that sits below the SNH HQ building. The intention is to ensure that this is secured by condition as part of the consideration of application 12/01832/S42.
- 8.17 Re-development of this building will result in an increase in traffic and activity during construction but this will be short term. The applicant will need to liaise with adjacent occupiers in particular as development progresses. The completed building will however substantially improve the amenity of the area as a whole.

Other considerations

8.18 There are no other material considerations. The material planning considerations are considered above.

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 The proposal will provide a high standard of amenity for residents and, on the whole, preserve the character of the listed building. While some will be dissapointed that the applicant has chosen not to re-instate the former chapel building, the applicant has provided a clear rationale for taking this approach. If nothing else, it needs to be considered as a necessary compromise to ensure that the future of the building is secure.
- 9.2 All relevant matters have been taken into account when appraising this application. It is considered that the proposal accords with the principles and policies contained within the Development Plan and is acceptable in terms of all other applicable

material considerations.

10. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that application 15/03910/MSC be **APPROVED** and listed building consent application 15/03911/LBC be **GRANTED** subject to the following conditions:

1. All stonework repairs and replacement shall use natural stone to match the existing stone of the building in terms of colour and porosity/density characteristics. Bedding joints shall use lime mortar only. Unless otherwise agreed, details of any stonework alteration and/or repair shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Planning Authority prior to work commencing. Only the agreed works shall be implemented. Note: samples may be required.

Reason: In order to preserve the character and appearance of the listed building.

2. The existing windows on the building shall be overhauled and repaired, with secondary glazing provided as necessary. Unless otherwise agreed in writing, double glazed units shall not be permitted.

Reason: In order to ensure a high quality design standard in the interest of visual amenity and preserve the character and appearance of the listed building.

3. All slate repairs to the roof shall be carried out using existing slate salvaged from the building and re-laid in diminishing courses to match. Only where there are insufficient slates shall substitutes be considered, details of which shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing by, the Planning Authority prior to use. Note: samples may be required.

Reason: In order to ensure a high quality design standard in the interest of visual amenity and preserve the character and appearance of the listed building.

With the exception of those identified for removal on the approved plan, the existing chimneys, finials and weather vanes on the roof of the building shall be repaired and retained. No work shall commence on the tower roof structures until details of the proposed railings located on the flat section of roof have been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Planning Authority.

Reason: In order to preserve the character and appearance of the listed building.

5. All replacement rainwater goods shall be cast iron to match the existing.

Reason: In order to preserve the character and appearance of the listed building:

6. No work shall commence on site until details, including colour and trade names where appropriate, of the render to be used on the external face of the building shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Council. Only the approved render shall be used thereafter.

Reason: In order to preserve the character and appearance of the listed building.

REASON FOR DECISION

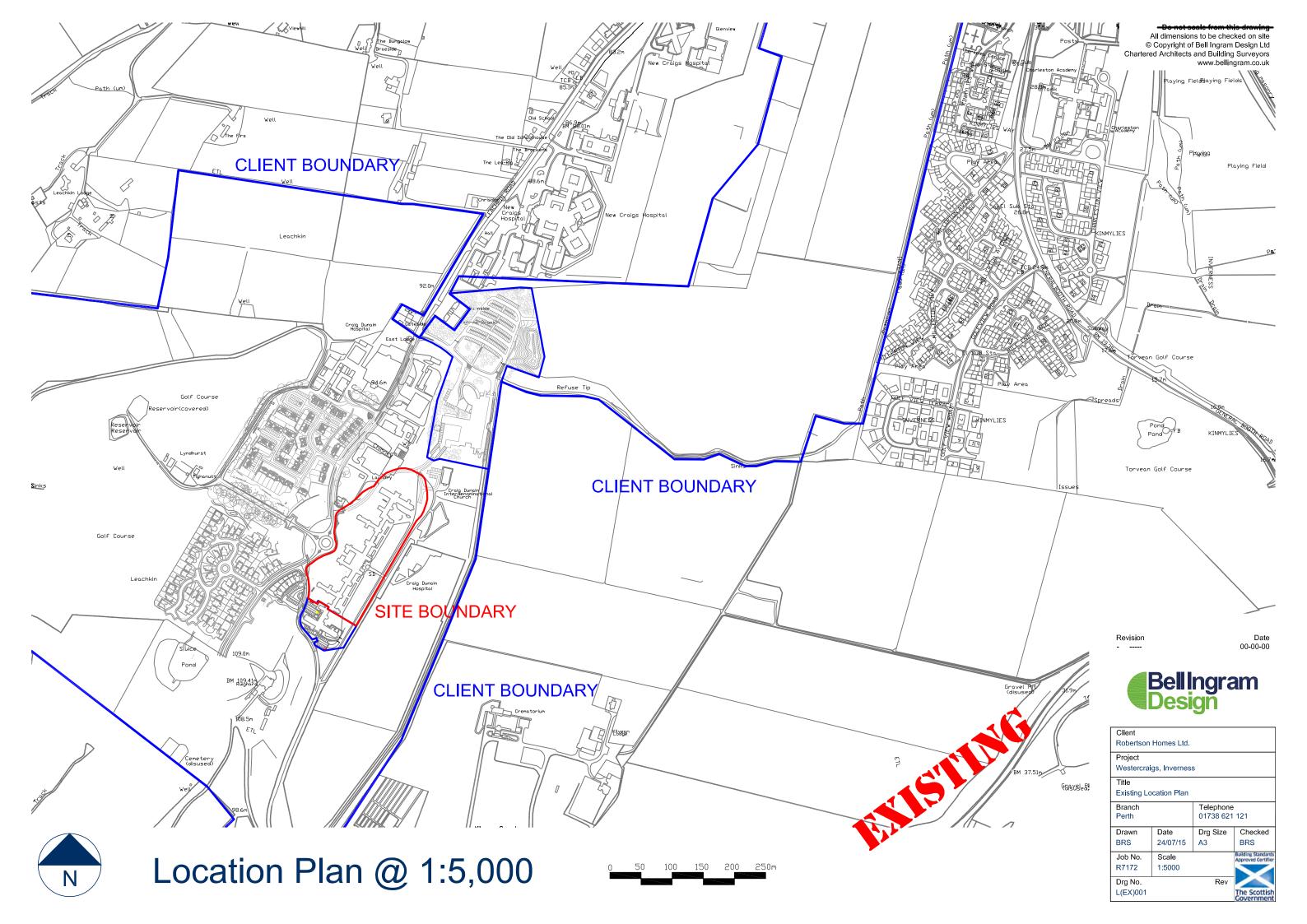
The proposals accord with the provisions of the Development Plan and there are no material considerations which would warrant refusal of the application.

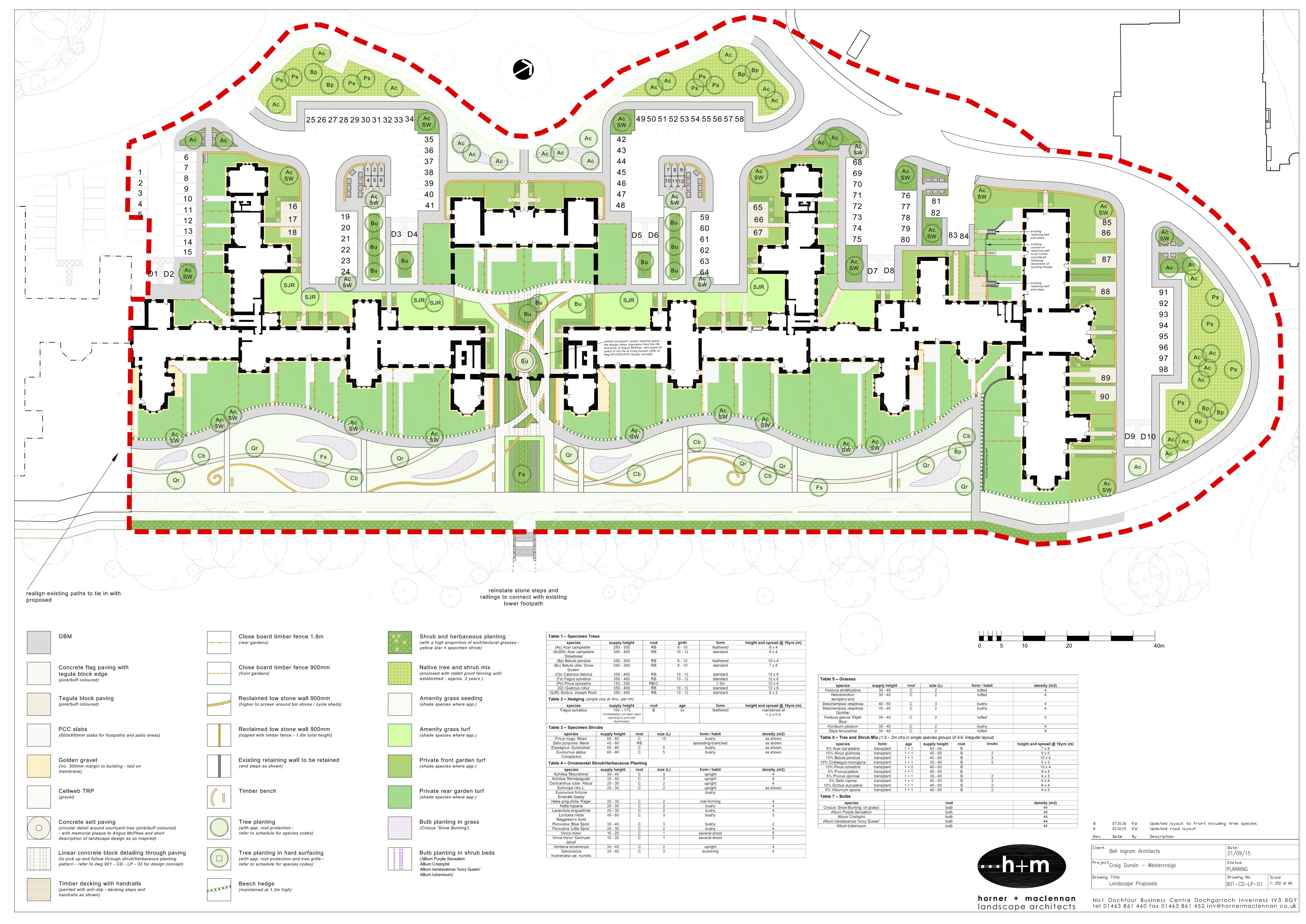
Designation: Head of Planning and Building Standards

Author: David Mudie, Team Leader - Development Management

Background Papers: Documents referred to in report and in case file.

Relevant Plans:













Project Westercraigs, Inverness



Proposed North East Elevations @ 1:200