

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Special Meeting - 7 March 2017

Agenda Item	3.1
Report No	HC/002/17

**16/04505/PIP : Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission PLC (SHET)
Land 810M SW of Noss Farm, Wick**

Report by Head of Planning and Environment

SUMMARY

Description : Erection of a High Voltage Direct Current Switching Station.

Recommendation : - **GRANT** planning permission in principal.

Ward : 03 – Wick.

Development category : National Development.

Pre-determination hearing : Yes.

Pre meeting site visit : Yes.

Reason referred to Council : National Development.

1. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

1.1 The application, in principal, is for the development of a High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) Switching Station to allow for the connection of a 600MW Direct Current (DC) link from Shetland to the 1,200MW DC link between Caithness and Moray, which is currently under construction. The development forms part of the wider Shetland Isles Connection, a national development referenced within National Planning Framework 3 (NPF3). The development will incorporate a 800MW DC link from the Spittal Alternating Current / Direct Current (AC/DC) Converter Station. It will also allow for one additional DC circuit as demand from future development emerges.

1.2 Planning permission in principal is being sought for the following key elements:

- A 'development platform' approximately 103m x 163m (exact extent of which is to be determined in line with the finalised building requirements).
- A 'Switching Station' including all plant and equipment enclosed within a building approximately 125m in length, 54m in width and 21m in height. The building height is not expected to be over 47m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD);
- A 'control and welfare building' ancillary to the main Switching Station approximately 33m in length and 18m in width;

- Hard and soft landscaping with a post and wire fence around the substation site boundary with a 'Caithness Flagstone' wall to the east of the substation along the boundary with the public road;
- Operational access into the site from the CI033 Road;
- A 2.4m high security fence and security measures (CCTV and lighting) around the perimeter of the landscaping;
- Pedestrian footway along the east of the CI033 between the construction access and the end of the development site;
- On-site construction area;
- 0.73km construction access road (5.0m width) linking the Noss Head road to the Ackergill road.

1.3 An indicative layout and building details are provided with the application. This is likely to change once a contractor is appointed to undertake the construction and installation of the switching station. SHET has outlined a proposal which is unlikely to change significantly and presents a worst case scenario in terms of the building size. As such a Design Framework has been developed which will then allow the Planning Authority to suspend its approval of final designs as part of the Matters Specified in Conditions (MSC) planning stage including details for : -

- Switching station design (within parameters above).
- Building and platform siting (within parameters specified above).
- Drainage details for SUDs scheme.
- Operational access road details.
- Hard and soft landscaping proposals.
- Proposals for the construction access including construction methods and improved outdoor access arrangements serving the area.

1.4 For the avoidance of doubt the cable connections to the HVDC Switching Station are not included within the application as these comprise 'permitted development' works available to the applicant (SHET) as a statutory undertaker. The final routing of these cable connections is yet to be finalised. Connections / cable routing, particularly offshore, will involve a Horizontal Drilling drill at Noss Head (as far as the mean high water spring tide) where the marine cable landfall is to be located.

1.5 Whilst lighting is to be provided at the site this would only be used when the site is being accessed during the winter months, or as necessary for safety purposes during the hours of darkness. The development will be managed as a "dark" site as there is no requirement for it to be constantly lit.

1.6 The application has been 'screened' out of requiring a supporting Environmental Statement under Town and Country Planning Environmental Impact Assessment (Scotland) Regulations. It nevertheless is supported with an Environmental Appraisal to assist with the assessment of the proposal in respect of cultural heritage; landscape and visual impact; ecology; ornithology; hydrology; flooding; draining; traffic and transport; access and recreation; and noise. The application advances a range of construction and environmental mitigation measures with recommendations for particular Species Protection Plans for example otters, raptors and other birds.

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The application site covers an area of 21.16ha (inclusive of the construction access road). The principal development area is located adjacent to the minor road that runs from Staxigoe to the end of the Noss Head peninsula all to the north side of the Wick / John O'Groats Airport. It is located approximately 2.5km to the south of the lighthouse and 1.4km west of the village of Staxigoe.
- 2.2 The proposed switching station site consists of two gently sloping fields of improved grassland in regular cultivation, with field boundaries of stone walls and post and wire fencing. The development area is set between the 25m–35m contours AOD. It is located in open countryside immediately west of the above minor C1033 road at a local low point in the road which drops down from the relative heights of Wick Airport before rising again towards Noss Farm. To the east, the land falls very gradually towards the coast at Staxigoe and to the west it falls gradually to the coast at Ackergillshore. This site also includes a new construction access track on the north side of the Wick Airport complex to connect with the Ackergill / Ackergillshore Road, which links to the A99 Wick to John O'Groats road.
- 2.3 The nearest settlements are Wick, Staxigoe and Papigoe. The nearest residential properties to the site are:
- Noss Farm and cottages either side of the farm (approximately 800m north);
 - Shorelands Farm (approximately 750m northwest);
 - Upper Ackergill (approximately 750m west); and
 - Field of Noss Farm (approximately 1,050m east).
- 2.4 The site carries no formal ecological or landscape designations. There are no statutory designated heritage assets recorded within the site boundary. However, within the 3 km surrounding area there are 3 Scheduled Monuments, 5 Category A Listed Buildings, 23 Category B Listed Buildings, 5 Category C Listed Buildings, and one Conservation Area. One non-designated heritage asset has been identified within the development site, this is a feature named Blackbridge (MHG13972).
- 2.5 There is a visitor's car park, picnic area and a way-marked walk to Castle Sinclair Girnigoe, located at the end of the public road to Noss Head, just south of the lighthouse. The lighthouse itself is privately owned and is not open to the public. There are three core paths in the area: -
- Broadhaven to Staxigoe;
 - Castle Girnigoe/Castle Sinclair; and
 - Wick to Coastline via Ackergill

3. PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 **27.04.2016** - Environmental Assessment Screening opinion for a high voltage direct current switching station and ancillary landscaping and drainage infrastructure etc. – Environmental Statement not required (16/01632/SCRE).

14.06.2016 – Planning Application Notification for a high voltage direct current switching station and ancillary landscaping and drainage infrastructure - (16/02707/PAN).

04.07.2016 - Pre application consultation for a switching station located close to the marine cable landfall site at Noss Head to minimise the need for additional underground cabling. The development would include landscaping, drainage, access and construction access provisions (16/02145/PREAPP).

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

4.1 **Advertised** : Schedule 3 Development.

Representation deadline : 4.11.2016

Timeous representations : 3 representations received, all objections.

Late representations : 0

4.2 Material considerations raised are summarised as follows:

- Visual intrusion to the surrounding land uses.
- Area of natural beauty for walkers, tourists and residents of the area.
- Adverse environmental impact on / at Noss Head (mussels; birds).
- Conflict with the existing agricultural interests / management.
- Landowner objection.

4.3 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. Access to computers can be made available via Planning and Development Service offices.

5. CONSULTATIONS

5.1 **Wick Community Council** has not responded to the application / consultation.

5.2 **THC Transport Planning (TP)** has no objection to the application. A request is made for planning conditions and legal agreement provision to ensure the local road network interests are secured from construction impacts.

5.3 **THC Environmental Health (EH)** has no objection to the application.

5.4 **THC Historic Environment Team (HET)** has no objection to the application. A request is made for a planning condition to ensure an assessment for unknown finds in advance of site clearance / preparation works.

5.5 **Highland and Islands Airport Ltd (HIAL)** has no objection to the application. A request is made for conditions to protect safeguards around Wick Airport.

- 5.6 **Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH)** has no objection to the application.
- 5.7 **Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA)** has no objection to the application. A request is made for conditions to secure a Construction and Environmental Management Plan addressing pollution prevention; sediment management; environmental incidents; fuel transport storage; concrete production / use; watercourse crossings and site waste management. It also requests finalised drawings for the Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDs) at the site to be agreed.
- 5.8 **Transport Scotland (TS)** has no objections to the application. A request is made for planning conditions related to the trunk road network and its users.
- 5.9 **Scottish Water** has not responded the application / consultation.

6. DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICY

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

Highland Wide Local Development Plan (HwLDP) (2012)

- 6.2 Policy 28 - Sustainable Design.
Policy 29 - Design Quality and Place-making.
Policy 31 - Developer Contribution.
Policy 36 - Development in the Wider Countryside.
Policy 49 - Coastal Development.
Policy 57 - Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage.
Policy 58 - Protected Species.
Policy 61 -Landscape.
Policy 63 - Water Environment.
Policy 64 - Flood Risk.
Policy 66 - Surface Water Drainage.
Policy 67 - Renewable Energy Developments.
Policy 69 - Electricity Transmission Infrastructure.
Policy 72 - Pollution.
Policy 77 - Public Access.

Caithness Local Development Plan (as continued in force) (2002)

- 6.3 No site specific allocations.

7. OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Scottish Government Planning Policy and Guidance

- 7.1 The Scottish Government have policies on Sustainability and Placemaking including policies for: -
- A Low Carbon Place
 - Delivering heat and electricity.
 - Support for construction and improvement of strategic energy infrastructure.

- Onshore wind.
- A Natural Resilient Place
 - Valuing the natural environment.
 - Promoting responsible extraction of resources.
 - Managing flood risk and drainage.

Modified Proposed - Caithness and Sutherland Local Development Plan (CaSLDP) (2016)

- 7.2 No site specific allocations. It is noteworthy that the plan identified the Wick settlement boundary as including the Wick / John O'Groats Airport through which construction access is undertaken linking minor Ackergill road with the Staxigoe / Noss Head CI033 road.

Other THC Planning Policy and Guidance

- 7.3 The Highland-wide Local Development Plan is currently under review and is at Main Issues Report Stage. It is anticipated the Proposed Plan will be published towards the end of 2017.
- 7.4 The Council has set out further advice on delivery of major developments in a number of documents. This guidance, adopted by the Council, includes : -
- Construction Environmental Management Process for Large Scale Projects (2010).

8. PLANNING APPRAISAL

- 8.1 Section 25 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 8.2 This means that the application requires to be assessed against all policies of the Development Plan relevant to the application, all national and local policy guidance and all other material considerations relevant to the application.
- 8.3 Key considerations include the Development Plan; National Policy; Layout and Design; Roads, Traffic and Public Access; Water, Drainage and Waste Water; Nature Conservation; Landscape and Visual Impact; Economic Impact including Tourism; Archaeology; Noise; Construction Impacts; Other Material Considerations.

Development Plan

- 8.4 The Development Plan comprises both the adopted Highland-wide Local Development Plan (HwLDP) and Caithness Local Development Plan. The latter plan is soon to be replaced by the Caithness and Sutherland Local Development Plan (CaSLDP) which is at an advanced stage. This recognises the settlement boundary of Wick extending northwards to include the Wick / John of Groats Airport complex with a range of established uses. The Development Plan must be read as

a whole, with application then assessed against all of the policies relevant to the proposed development and its location. Conformity with a single policy or element of the plan does not necessarily indicate that a proposal is acceptable. There are no site specific policies affecting this application site within the Caithness Local Plan or the emerging CaSLDP. The HwLDP adopted in April 2012 is up-to-date and thereby considered relevant.

- 8.5 The principal HwLDP policy on which the application needs to be determined is Policy 69 - Electricity Transmission Infrastructure. Other policies listed at 6.2 of this report are also relevant and the application must be assessed against these also for example Policy 61 - Landscape. These matters are assessed in full within a number of material considerations examined within this report. These include matters raised within the submissions from public representations.
- 8.6 The Development Plan supports the broad principle of energy development. Policy 69 specifically highlights that the “Council will have regard to their level of strategic significance in transmitting electricity from areas of generation to areas of consumption.” “It will support proposals which are assessed as not having unacceptable impact on the environment including natural, built and cultural heritage features.” Where development is assessed as not having unacceptable significant impact on the environment, then the proposal would accord with the Development Plan.

National Policy

- 8.7 Scotland's Third National Planning Framework sets out the government's thoughts on how best to achieve a more successful country through increasing sustainable economic growth. It includes plans for infrastructural investment including a high voltage electricity transmission network vital in meeting national targets for electricity generation, statutory climate change targets and security of energy supplies. The current application falls into the category of National Development. Whilst this establishes a need for the project all necessary assessments and consents are still required for such development. Appropriate levels of mitigation would still be expected to avoid or reduce environmental effects and demonstrate no adverse effects on the integrity of European protected sites.
- 8.8 An aim of the planning system is to achieve the right development in the right place; not to allow development at any cost. SPP introduces a presumption in favour of development that contributes to sustainable development. The connection of approved renewable energy projects to the grid, which would be enhanced by this project, advances its sustainable development credentials. The expansion of the grid transmission network in the north of Scotland not only is a short term economic construction boost, but also a long term infrastructural benefit to the area.
- 8.9 Further advice is provided in SPP in respect of potential impacts on the natural environment and the need to protect and enhance Scotland's key natural resources including landscape, ecology, habitats and biodiversity. The impacts on these resources have been presented within the supporting Environmental Appraisal (EA) and are considered in more detail within this assessment. The policies and

content of Scottish Planning Policy is a material consideration that carries significant weight, but it is for the decision maker to determine the appropriate weight in each case. If there are no significant impacts on valued resources the development can be supported.

Layout and Design

- 8.10 To provide the most effective economic solution and reduce the amount of onshore cabling the applicant's preference is to locate the Switching Station close to the HVDC marine cable landfall site. Furthermore it considers that given wider environmental and topographical constraints a site north of Wick at Noss Head presents the best location for the cable landfall. Although the switchgear is to be air insulated, given the coastal environment, all equipment is to be housed in a building. This switching station will therefore introduce a large structure into the local rural / coastal landscape on the edge of the settlement of Wick. The Council policies on Sustainable Design, Design Quality and Place-making and development in the Wider Countryside are relevant, recognising the need to respect the quality and distinctiveness of its context. In this regard the juxtaposition of the proposed development in proximity of the airport and its associated hangers is regarded as beneficial.
- 8.11 The buildings will require a platform to allow for cabling and service access. The approximate dimensions of the development platform are 103m x 163m. It will be dug in to the existing fields, already low in the landscape, to help further reduce the overall height appearance of the building in the wider landscape. The application will execute landscaping works including appropriate landscape bunds to assist with screening of the development from wider views.
- 8.12 The design of the Switching Station allows for the necessary clearances around the electrical equipment and for safe access for inspection during operation and maintenance. The main building will be approximately 54m wide and 125m long (at its base). The height of the main building is 21m which allows for a clear equipment height of 17m within the building. The remaining 4m is used for structure, fabric and the curvature of the roof to ensure the roof can be drained along the external edges.
- 8.13 To assist with the understanding of this in principle application the applicant has developed a design framework for approval. It highlights a number of key parameters for the expected finalised detailed including: -
- The Switching Station and ancillary control building will not exceed a height 47m AOD.
 - The Switching Station (although not the control and welfare building) will remain in its proposed orientation (i.e. it will not be significantly rotated).
 - The Switching Station will feature a curved roof design to reflect the surrounding slopes as far as is reasonably possible.
 - The Switching Station shall have angled walls to the long elevations inverted towards the base of the switching station to accentuate the curve of the roof.

- The Switching Station will be finished in steel profile sheeting in a palette of colours as set out in the Design Framework or otherwise agreed with the Planning Authority.
- The colour palette of materials will be greys as set out in the supporting drawings unless otherwise agreed in writing with the planning authority

8.14 The above provisions are certainly welcomed and can be supported. However it also suggests that although not expected to increase, the exact width and length of the building will be confirmed in the detailed planning stage, which the applicant suggests these dimensions could be increased by more than 10%. The Council might prefer no such allowance, without commensurate changes to the landscape works currently designed to screen the proposed switching station. The response from HIAL is also particularly relevant in terms of the building height – see para 8.44.

Roads, Traffic Impact and Public Access

- 8.15 At the operational stage, access to the site will be quite limited and infrequent. Construction traffic for both phases will access the site from the A99 Wick - John O Groats road via the U1348 Ackergill road, a section of upgraded private access track and the U2440 Noss Head road. This route was selected to ensure that construction traffic avoids the more populated areas of Staxigoe and Papigoe. At this stage there are no envisaged abnormal load deliveries to site. Upgrades to the private access track and the passing places on the U2440 Noss Head road will be completed as part of the enabling works contract. Road Construction Consent will be sought for the details of these upgrades to the public road network. It is worth noting that although this access has been agreed in principle with the landowner, a formal agreement has not been concluded at this time.
- 8.16 The existing field access from the U2440 Noss Head road to the switching station site will be upgraded to accommodate the larger vehicles which will be accessing the site. The design of this will be in accordance with the Highland Council's Roads and Transport Guidelines for New Developments. This will be submitted for Road Construction Consent as a design package which will include dimensioned drawings showing details of geometry, construction and drainage as well as drawings to demonstrate that visibility splays specified can be achieved. A section 96 “wear and tear” agreement will be arranged with The Highland Council for the sections of road that are not classified as A class roads or Trunk Roads. These include the sections of both the U1348 Ackergill road and the U2440 Noss Head road.
- 8.17 A section 96 “wear and tear” agreement will be arranged with the Council for the roads that are not classified as A class roads or Trunk Roads. These include the sections of both the U1348 Ackergill road and the U2440 Noss Head road. This will provide for a pre-construction survey report; a high definition video of the agreed route; a detailed list of defects and repair solutions; and weekly inspections recording, monitoring and reporting. It is currently estimated that the cut and fill balance of the site works including landscape bund provision may have an excess

of material in the region of 35,000m³. It is expected this will be reduced significantly through the final design phase and thereby reduce the impact on the local road network.

- 8.18 The applicant is committed to ensuring there is segregation between construction vehicles and recreation throughout the construction phase to ensure the works can be completed with minimal risk to the public. There is potential to investigate the wider public footpath network to ensure that this segregation can be achieved if required through the final design process.
- 8.19 Transport Scotland is content with the application, subject to planning conditions and informatives are attached to any content. These are to ensure that as all transport requirements are finalised, including the need for any abnormal loads, that any alterations to the Trunk Road network, including signage, are authorised to ensure the safety and free flow of traffic on the network.
- 8.20 The Council's Transport Planning team is satisfied with the applicant's appraisal of traffic and transport associated with the proposed development, but recognises this is simply a planning in principle application. Accordingly further information and agreement on a number of matters will be required through a subsequent detailed / MSC planning application. This subsequent application will need to be supported with finalised assessment information, the provisions for which can be set out in the supporting legal agreement, planning conditions and informatives granted as part of any approval. It will in particular require approval of a finalised Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP). Of note, this must also recognise the potential cumulative impact that may arise from the wider land based cable works. Works within or adjacent to the Council's road network will also require approval through the Road authorities Road Construction Consent (RCC) process.

Water, Drainage and Waste Water

- 8.21 The site falls within a relative small catchment with no fluvial or coastal flooding risk that would affect the development or be affected by the development proposal. Areas of pluvial flooding risk have been identified in pockets within the area. Development of the site has the potential to change the level of run off from the site As such a SUDs scheme has been considered which would mitigate any impact on the hydrology or increased flood risk that could otherwise be attributed to such development.
- 8.22 Discharge to the existing drainage is to be designed to cope with runoff from the 200 year storm event from the development site. A 20% allowance for Climate Change has been included in the calculations of the design of the drainage system to ensure current green field rates and drainage patterns will be retained. Management measures are to be employed during the construction of the development and these are to be set out in a pre commencement Construction Environment Management Plan CEMP.
- 8.23 SEPA has welcomed the submission of the Drainage Impact Assessment (DIA) but notes it does not currently contain the information required to demonstrate that the proposals will provide adequate treatment in line with the requirements of The

SUDS Manual C753. It is satisfied that the proposed ditches, if designed correctly as swales coupled with attenuation ponds will provide treatment but additional treatment may be required. It also requires that the access track be considered in this assessment. These can all be addressed within the submission of the finalised design proposals requiring the planning authority's approval in consultation with SEPA.

- 8.24 SEPA has advised that in finalising the design details the applicant should ensure the SUDs strategy provides, and can be shown to provide by way of the current design methods and adequate pollution mitigation.
- 8.25 Once built potable water to the development will be mains supplied subject to agreement with Scottish Water. In addition waste water will be managed using a septic tank with discharge to an infiltration mound subject to approval by SEPA. Water for construction purposes for welfare facilities and dust suppression will either be brought to site by tanker or abstracted, which will be subject to control under CAR as authorised by SEPA. Potable water will be from bottled supply. Waste water from construction welfare facilities will be removed by tanker to the nearest licensed Scottish Water wastewater facility.

Nature Conservation

- 8.26 The proposed switching station site spans two improved grassland grazing pastures of low ecological value. Survey's of the site found no evidence of protected or notable species although together with the surrounding area there is potential for otter and foraging bats. There is no European / Internationally designated site within 2km of the site, but such designations prevail within 10km of the site including the East Caithness cliffs Special Area Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Area (SPA) and Marine Protection Area (MPA).
- 8.27 SNH has advised this proposal is inside the foraging range of some birds from the Caithness Lochs Special Protection Area (SPA) classified for its wintering geese and swans. It advises that the Council is required to consider the effect of the proposal on the SPA before it can be consented (commonly known as Habitats Regulations Appraisal). In its view it is unlikely that the proposal will have a significant effect on any qualifying interests either directly or indirectly. Although some birds from the SPA may use this area for foraging, especially in very cold winters, the loss of this habitat is unlikely to affect the conservation objectives of the SPA. There is abundant similar habitat in the wider area which will continue to support these birds. An appropriate assessment is therefore not required.

Landscape and Visual Impact

- 8.28 The development is located in open countryside immediately west of the minor road to Noss Head Lighthouse, at a local low point in the road which drops down from the relative heights of Wick Airport before rising towards Noss Farm. The surrounding landscape is generally agricultural with well structured, grid-like fields, with generally strong boundaries which stretch out as far as the rugged coastline with few vertical elements to break the horizon. The landscape is characterised by small settlements and isolated farmhouses which add to the often sparse and

isolated feel of the area. Wick Airport, including two large hangers, is a prominent feature in this landscape as are at a local level only the former bomb store bunkers to the north east side of the airport.

- 8.29 The site falls within Landscape Character Type - Open Intensive Farmland. This character type is dominated by its openness and flat or gently sloping landform which combine to result in extreme exposure and extensive visibility. The key considerations of forces for change within this character type concern its openness, simple composition, and landscape pattern. The openness of the landscape means that change or development tends to be clearly visible, especially if highlighted by the distinct northern coastal light; however, the openness of the landscape and the neighbouring sea also means that new elements tend to appear minor in comparison to its large scale. The wider study area for the proposed scheme falls across three of LCTs namely Open Intensive Farmland, Town (Wick) and Harbour, although there is no impact on the Harbour LCT.
- 8.30 It is clear that at a very local level (within a few hundred of metres) the impact of the development, given its scale, will be significant. However in landscape terms due to the extensive open character of the surrounding farmland landscape area and the proposed design of the building the impact on the landscape is much less. The shaping of the roof, setting down of the development into the landscape, the proposed bunding and proximity to existing largescale buildings at Wick Airport the effect on the landscape is well reduced. To the landscape of Wick, there are few parts of the town where the development would be even seen, given the local topography and built up nature of the settlement. No significant effect is therefore seen on this latter landscape character type.
- 8.31 The Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) map of the development to the surrounding area and viewpoint analysis (six locations) that help to explain the likely visual impact on receptors surrounding the development.
- 8.32 **VP 1 A99 North of Thrumster** - 8km south of the development highlights the view that drivers travelling north towards Wick would experience. Currently the hangers at Wick Airport are visible in the vista. The development would add an additional large built element to this view at distance. There is no significant adverse impact upon receptors at this location.
- 8.33 **VP 2 South of Reiss** – 2.8km west of the development highlights the view that drivers on the A99 travelling south and some local residents would have of the development. The development would add a large low building of similar scale to the existing farm steadings, but clearly a single structure, within a broad view of open farmland. There is no significant adverse impact upon receptors at this location.
- 8.34 **VP 3 Ackergill road** – 1.6km west of the development to users of this local road, core path and nearby residents. The development would appear on the low and nearby horizon, with only the uppermost section of the building in view. This is not dissimilar to the nearby former bomb store area by the airport. The visual impact of the development is seen as acceptable / moderate to minor impact.

- 8.35 **VP 4 Monument at Staxigoe** – 1.6km southeast of the development representing nearby residents at Staxigoe, potentially also Papigoe and Hillhead, as well as visitors on the road to Noss Head. The development would provide a new focal point with the bunding and the building proud of the wide horizon. The visual impact is seen as moderate and thereby significant to receptors in this area. Overall receptors in this area are low in number.
- 8.36 **VP 6 by Noss Head Farm** - 800m to the north of the development. This viewpoint represents the local farm residents and returning visitors to Noss Head / Castle Sinclair Girnigoe. The development would introduce a large building into the gentle dip in the landscape, positioned so that it is viewed against a background of the intermediate horizon formed by Wick Airport. It would be a substantial change (significant), albeit the building would be fully back-clothed (below the horizon) and in the context of the airport.
- 8.37 In the wider area there are a few location of note where receptors would experience the development. This includes Noss Head Lighthouse which offers a vantage point across the North Sea and along the rocky coasts. Receptors here would typically include visitors to the lighthouse (a private study facility) and small numbers of walkers. The development would be visible at a distance of some two kilometres, inland away from the focus of views here, and in the context of Wick, the airport and the hangars. It would be a visual change of very low magnitude.
- 8.38 To the north west of Upper Ackergill lies Ackergill Tower, a 15th century tower house converted into a luxury hotel, in a 1,200ha private estate, perched on the northern coastline with extensive gardens and policy planting, particularly on the eastern edge. Theoretical views may be possible from the tower's top floors, although given the mature boundary planting screening views to the east this is unlikely. The visual effects for receptors at this location are therefore considered to be minor.
- 8.39 Travellers heading towards Wick on the A99 would see the Switching Station between Reiss and just east of Ackergill. The development would be visible above the horizon in the broad views available from the road, a new element of similar scale to the existing farm steadings but clearly different as a single structure. It would be a very low magnitude of change for receptors of medium to high sensitivity, a minor visual effect. Further west there would be more distant visibility from a broad area from Hill of Harland through Reiss and down to the coast. At these distances, three to five kilometres, the development would be a small element in a broad view, a negligible to minor change with no significant effects.
- 8.40 South of Wick the development would be distantly visible from a broad swathe of country from Stirkoke to Hill of Stemster to the South Head of Wick Bay. However given the distance and the scale of the views no significant visual effects are predicted from this area.

- 8.41 The assessment of the development above recognises in full the offered landform mitigation, which is designed so that the building effectively sits inside a small hill. This hides the lower half of the building and makes it appear wider and lower than it actually is. It has attracted very limited concern both from consultees and the public.

Economic Impact including Tourism

- 8.42 The development of grid infrastructure has been identified as a national priority together within investment in renewable energy. The development of such projects not only are beneficial in strengthening the robustness of the country's grid network, further job and investment are created through the development of associated supply chains. The development is required to facilitate the connection of wind farms to the national grid, which will allow the export of electricity generated to consumers. The relationship of the development to the economic and social benefits of the wind energy developments is therefore relevant, in a positive way.
- 8.43 Caithness is currently experiencing a construction boom, with significant construction activity in the transmission network, for example Spittal HVDC Converter substation and Thurso, South Substation. The approval of the current application will have similar short term (2-3 years) construction economic impact, although significantly less impact at the operational stage. The design, landscape and limited visual impact beyond the initial 1,500m, the adverse impacts of the development are not anticipated to have adverse impact on the local economy, particularly tourism. Its impact at a more local level equally is not anticipated to adversely impact on existing tourist interests.
- 8.44 Noss Head is the key local interest for tourists, with specific tourist interpretation points at Staxigoe Harbour and at Castle Sinclair Girnigoe. It is likely that during the construction phase tourists trying to access Castle Sinclair Girnigoe will experience moderate levels of disruption when travelling along Noss Head road to reach the car park. This will be temporary and will be managed through a traffic management scheme that will be included as part of the CEMD, restricting hours of work and detailing traffic routing to the site. It is also intended to provide a permanent footway along the affected section of Noss Head road to ensure that there is segregation between the construction vehicles and recreational users. Once operational levels of disruption to recreational users from vehicles using the Noss Head road will be very limited.

Archaeology

- 8.45 There are no statutory designated heritage assets recorded within the site boundary. Within the surrounding area 3km there are a small number of heritage assets that have potential for their setting to be affected including Cairn of Elsay, Scheduled Monument; The Pap Broch (also known as the Hillhead Broch), Scheduled Monument; Castle Sinclair Girnigoe, Scheduled Monument; Noss Head Lighthouse, Category A Listed Building; and Ackergill Tower, Stables and Walled Gardens, Category A Listed Building. For the most part for reasons of distance,

local topography, existing development and design mitigation as set out in the application, there are no anticipated significant effects arising from the proposed development.

- 8.46 Archaeological evidence from the surrounding area suggests there is the potential for unknown heritage assets to exist within the proposed development site ranging from the Prehistoric to the Post-Medieval period, to be present. It is for this reason that the Council's Archaeology Team has requested a condition to secure a watching brief associated with all ground breaking activities.

Aviation

- 8.47 The development presents a building of scale adjacent to Wick airport. Highlands and Islands Airports Limited (HIAL) has confirmed that given its position and height the development is unlikely to infringe the safeguarding surfaces for Wick Airport. However it would require confirmation that the ridge height shown on the mitigation plan is 47m Above Ordnance Datum and not above existing ground level. Furthermore that no vegetation will be used in the landscaping that is attractive to birds i.e. dense shrubs or berry or seed bearing vegetation. Advice on planting can be provided as necessary. This to reduce the risk of aircraft bird strikes and can be processed using planning conditions.

Noise

- 8.48 The nature of this switching station is different to the largescale substations that the Council has recently experienced across Highland. Firstly it involves only DC equipment and secondly, although it will use air cooling (as opposed to gas insulated equipment), it is all contained within a building. Transmission cables for this technology are all placed underground, quite different to the standard overhead lines used with AC transmission.
- 8.49 The noise assessment submitted in support of the application shows that noise levels will be negligible. Noise at 30dBA will have dissipated largely within the application site boundary. The site is also distant from noise sensitive properties, the nearest of which is several hundred metres away. The Council's Environmental Health Officer is content with the assessment supporting the application and has raised no concerns with the application.

Construction Impacts

- 8.50 The development will involve considerable construction activity in connection with the excavation of the site and formation of large landscape bunds, together with the erection of the switching station building. Construction traffic to the site including the work force, but primarily site offices and deliveries, is of most concern. For the main civil construction works, the average daily movements are 14 vehicles, which is equivalent to just over one vehicle per hour. The peak daily movements are indicated as 100 vehicles per day, which is equivalent to over 7 vehicles per hour.

- 8.51 The applicant in anticipation of these impacts has proposed a new construction access between the minor CI033 road and minor Ackergill road. In this manner construction traffic impact on the residential areas between Wick and Staxigoe, will be avoided and use of the main road network maximised. The applicant has offer mitigation through the finalised Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) and Construction and Environmental Management Documents (CEMD) to be submitted for approval prior to commencement of development. Through these submissions HGV traffic movements can be restricted to avoid peak times / school bus runs, with use of passing places by slow moving vehicles to reduce disruption to traffic flows.
- 8.52 The deployment of the CEMD is consistent with Council advice for largescale development. In this manner construction impacts can be minimised through adoption of best practices to minimise impact on nearby properties. It will include for example the location and orientation of plant / equipment away from the nearest properties wherever possible; selection of inherently quiet plan and equipment to provide a reduction of noise at source; avoiding unnecessary running of plant / equipment; use of acoustic covers on construction plant / equipment (wherever practical); and regular maintenance of plant / equipment. The Council will also require through condition for the establishment of a Community Liaison Group to ensure an open channel for dialogue between the developer and the contractor, with the local community.

Other Material Considerations

- 8.53 The issue of impact on the existing agricultural management is not seen as significant. The development would see the loss of two fields, within a much larger agricultural unit which could be expected to function.
- 8.54 There are no other relevant material factors highlighted within submissions made on this application.

Other Considerations – not material

- 8.55 The objection in respect of land ownership is not material to the consideration of this application, but more matter of private negotiation. It is noteworthy that the applicant does have Compulsory Purchase Powers should they be necessary.

Matters to be secured by Section 75 Agreement

- 8.56 None.
- 8.57 It is noteworthy that the Council will require a Section 96 “Wear and Tear” agreement under the Roads (Scotland) Act prior to the commencement of any development on site. This will ensure an appropriate bond is available to repair any damage to the local road network through the construction period.

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 The Scottish Government and the Council each have policies in support of projects which increase the capacity of the grid network to serve the community and in particular the significant level of investment in renewable energy. NPF3 justifies the need for such investment highlighting such development as of national importance.
- 9.2 Highland has been successful in attracting inward investment in renewables, enabled in part by a matching level of investment in the improvement of the grid transmission system. This success has led to the Highlands having a good understanding of this type of project and this Council having appropriate policies and guidance to assist in its assessment and to effectively manage their implementation on the ground. For example, the use of Construction and Environmental Management Documents / Plans "CEMD", a particular approach to assist with the implementation / management of such largescale projects with a focus on environmental protection. There are investment benefits too that help favour these projects, not just from the short term construction but a continued stream of investment assisting with apprenticeships schemes and partnership networks with local companies.
- 9.3 Statutory and other consultees responding to this application are generally supportive. No significant adverse impacts have been identified with this project following assessment by statutory consultees. Some have requested planning conditions to be attached to any grant of planning permission to effectively ensure that their specific interests are secured. Of particular importance with this application is the request from Highland and Islands Airports limited for conditions on building height and landscaping choices to ensure no risk on flights into and out of the airport.
- 9.4 The application has raised a small number of objections from the public. These elements are considered in the assessment. It is considered that there are no issues that merit the proposal to be re-configured. The applicant has brought forward in the first instance mitigation through design to help reduce the impact of the proposals. This includes the promotion of a substation that internalises all electrical equipment; it is setback from local housing / roads; the provision of a construction access route that will keep traffic away from local housing; setting development into the landscape; landscape bunding; and improved footpaths. For these reasons the expected impact of the development on the community is not considered to be significantly detrimental. The key, significant effects relate in the main to landscape and visual impact. The landscape effects are seen to be limited to an area of a few hundreds of metres around the proposed development and visual effects to the area within about 1.5km.
- 9.5 The development would introduce a large industrial element into an open rural landscape, albeit one close to and affected by the presence of Wick Airport. It would have a major adverse landscape effect very locally, a minor effect at the scale of the Noss Head peninsula, and a minor to negligible effect on the area of

Open Intensive Farmland LCT as a whole. The effect would be greatest during the construction phase, when active movement and the initial change would disturb the tranquillity of this landscape.

- 9.6 There would be significant visual effects on fewer than a dozen receptors. There would be significant effect from receptors at Noss Farm and the adjacent cottages, and from Upper Ackergill. There would also be adverse effects from the minor road to Noss Head (tourist and recreational receptors). About six residential receptors on the edge of Staxigoe would receive lesser but still significant effect. The effects on the visual amenity would be more marked during construction with the active change, the presence of moving construction vehicles and the bare earth of a construction site. Over time, as the mitigation planting develops the degree of impact will reduce such that eventually, only the closest receptors (Noss Farm and adjacent cottages and Upper Ackergill) would be subject to significant visual effects. The impacts however are not to the extent that would be detrimental to existing properties and the occupiers of these houses.
- 9.7 There are clear impacts that might be expected from this development, particularly in its construction. These can be managed through best practice construction management techniques to ensure surrounding interests particularly the landscape and access interests are safeguarded from the key impacts and by planning conditions to strengthen and clarify the plans and supporting information as submitted by the applicant for approval.
- 9.8 The application can be supported in the context of the Council's Development Plan and in particular its policies on Electricity Transmission Infrastructure and the underlying support for renewable energy development which is consented in this area. 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. The latter view has particular regard for the support for transmission as highlighted within Policy 69 of the HwLDP.

10. 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** planning permission in principle subject to the following conditions and reasons / notes to applicant:

1. No development shall commence until all of the matters specified below have been approved on application to the Planning Authority: -

- I. A detailed layout of the site of the proposed development (including site levels as existing and proposed);
- II. The design and external appearance of the proposed development in compliance with the parameters as set out in the Design Framework submitted within the planning in principle application hereby approved ;
- III. Landscaping proposals for the site of the proposed development (including boundary treatments);
- IV. Details of access and parking arrangements; and
- V. Details of the proposed water supply, waste water and all site drainage arrangements. Surface water drainage provision must accord with the principles of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) and best practice guidance allowing for a 1 in 200 year storm event plus 20% for climate change.

Reason: Planning permission is granted in principle only and these specified matters must be approved prior to development commencing and to ensure compliance with the principles set out in the applicant's supporting Design Framework.

2 Any details pursuant to Condition 1 one above shall ensure that : -

- a. The ridge height of the proposed building shall not exceed 47m Above Ordnance Datum; and
- b. No vegetation will be deployed on site that is attractive to birds i.e. dense shrubs or berry or seed bearing vegetation.

Reason: - to maintain the safeguarding interests around Wick Airport.

3 No development (excluding site survey information and ground investigations, which shall be permitted) shall commence until a finalised Construction Environmental Management Document ("the CEMD") is submitted to and agreed in writing by the Planning Authority in consultation with SEPA and other appropriate consultees as appropriate. The CEMD shall include provision for:

- A. An updated Schedule of Mitigation (SM).
- B. Processes to control / action changes from the agreed Schedule of Mitigation.
- C. The following specific Construction and Environmental Management Plans (CEMPs):
 - i. Details of the construction works, construction methods and surface treatment for all hard surfaces and tracks;
 - ii. Method of working cable trenches;
 - iii. Details of the temporary site compounds, for the storage of materials and machinery, including the areas designated for offices, welfare facilities; fuel storage and car parking;
 - iv. Pollution Prevention Plan
 - v. Site Waste Management Plan
 - vi. Dust Management Plan
 - vii. Construction Noise Mitigation Plan.

- viii. Species Protection Plan(s): - The pre construction survey for legally protected species is carried out at an appropriate time of year for the species, at a maximum of 12 months preceding commencement of construction, and that a watching brief is then implemented during construction. The area that is surveyed should include all areas directly affected by construction plus an appropriate buffer to identify any species within disturbance distance of construction activity. Construction management should ensure provision of a communication plan to ensure all contractors are aware of the possible presence of protected species frequenting the site and the laws / best practices relating to their protection;

Unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Planning Authority the development shall then proceed in accordance with the approved CEMD.

Reason: To secure the final detailed information on the delivery of all on-site mitigation projects and to protect the environment from the construction and operation of the development.

- 4 No development shall commence until a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) has been submitted to, and approved by, the Planning Authority in consultation with the relevant Roads Authority(s) and Transport Scotland. The CTMP, which shall be implemented as approved during all periods of construction must include:
- a. A description of all measures to be implemented by the developer in order to manage traffic during the construction phase (incl. routing strategies), with any additional or temporary signage and traffic control undertaken by a recognised suitably qualified traffic management consultant;
 - b. The identification and delivery of all upgrades to the public road network to ensure that it is to a standard capable of accommodating construction related traffic (including the formation or improvement of any junctions leading from the site to the public road) to the satisfaction of The Highland Council and Transport Scotland, including;
 - i. An initial route assessment report for construction traffic (any abnormal loads), including swept path analysis and details of the movement of any street furniture, any traffic management measures and any upgrades and mitigations measures as necessary;
 - ii. An assessment of the capacity of existing bridges and other structures along the construction access routes to cater for all construction traffic, with upgrades and mitigation measures proposed and implemented as necessary;
 - iii. To cater for deliveries of any abnormal loads a videoed trial run to confirm the ability of the local road network. Three weeks notice of this trial run must be made to the local Roads Authority who must be in attendance;

- iv. No deliveries by any abnormal indivisible loads shall take place until a final assessment of the capacity of existing bridges and structures along the abnormal indivisible load delivery route is carried out and submitted to and approved by the Planning Authority and full engineering details and drawings of any works required to such structures to accommodate the passage of abnormal indivisible loads have been submitted to and approved by the planning authority. Thereafter the approved works shall be completed prior to the abnormal indivisible load deliveries to the site.
 - c. A procedure for the regular monitoring of road conditions and the implementation of any remedial works required during construction.
 - d. Details of any upgrading works required at the junction of the site access and the public road. Such works may include suitable drainage measures, improved geometry and construction, measures to protect the public road and the provision and maintenance of appropriate visibility splays.
 - e. Details of appropriate traffic management which shall be established and maintained at the site access for the duration of the construction period. Full details shall be submitted for the prior approval of Highland Council, as roads authority.
 - f. Wheel cleaning measures to ensure water and debris are prevented from discharging from the site onto the public road;
 - g. Appropriate reinstatement works shall be carried out, as required by Highland Council, at the end of the construction period.
 - h. A concluded agreement in accordance with Section 96 of the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 under which the developer is responsible for the repair of any damage to the local road network that can reasonably be attributed to construction related traffic. As part of this agreement, pre-start and post-construction road condition surveys must be carried out by the developer, to the satisfaction of the Roads Authority(s). It will also require the submission of an appropriate financial bond acceptable to the Council in respect of the risk of any road reconstruction works.
5. No development or work (including site clearance) shall commence until a programme of work for the evaluation, preservation and recording of any archaeological and historic features affected by the proposed development/work, including a timetable for investigation, all in accordance with the attached specification, has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Planning Authority. The approved programme shall be implemented in accordance with the agreed timetable for investigation.

Reason. In order to protect the archaeological and historic interest of the site.

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.

TIME LIMITS

In accordance with Section 59 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended), an application or applications for the approval of matters specified in conditions attached to this planning permission in principle must be made no later than whichever is the latest of the following:

- I. The expiration of THREE YEARS from the date on this decision notice;
- II. The expiration of SIX MONTHS from the date on which an earlier application for the requisite approval was refused; or
- III. The expiration of SIX MONTHS from the date on which an appeal against such refusal was dismissed.

The development to which this planning permission in principle relates must commence no later than TWO YEARS from the date of the requisite approval of any matters specified in conditions (or, in the case of approval of different matters on different dates, from the date of the requisite approval for the last such matter being obtained)., whichever is the later. If development has not commenced within this period, then this planning permission in principle shall lapse.

FOOTNOTE TO APPLICANT

Initiation and Completion Notices

The Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended) requires all developers to submit notices to the Planning Authority prior to, and upon completion of, development. These are in addition to any other similar requirements (such as Building Warrant completion notices) and failure to comply represents a breach of planning control and may result in formal enforcement action.

The developer must submit a Notice of Initiation of Development in accordance with Section 27A of the Act to the Planning Authority prior to work commencing on site.

On completion of the development, the developer must submit a Notice of Completion in accordance with Section 27B of the Act to the Planning Authority.

Copies of the notices referred to are attached to this decision notice for your convenience.

Accordance with Approved Plans and Conditions

You are advised that development must progress in accordance with the plans approved under, and any conditions attached to, this permission. You must not deviate from this permission without consent from the Planning Authority (irrespective of any changes that may separately be requested at the Building

Warrant stage or by any other Statutory Authority). 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 adhere to this permission and meet the requirements of all conditions may invalidate your permission or result in formal enforcement action

Flood Risk

It is important to note that the granting of planning permission does not imply there is an unconditional absence of flood risk relating to (or emanating from) the application site. As per Scottish Planning Policy (p.198), planning permission does not remove the liability position of developers or owners in relation to flood risk.

Scottish Water

You are advised that a supply and connection to Scottish Water infrastructure is dependent on sufficient spare capacity at the time of the application for connection to Scottish Water. The granting of planning permission does not guarantee a connection. Any enquiries with regards to sewerage connection and/or water supply should be directed to Scottish Water on 0845 601 8855.

Septic Tanks and Soakaways

Where a private foul drainage solution is proposed, you will require separate consent from the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA). Planning permission does not guarantee that approval will be given by SEPA and as such you are advised to contact them direct to discuss the matter (01349 862021).

Local Roads Authority Consent

In addition to planning permission, you may require one or more separate consents (such as dropped kerb consent, a road openings permit, occupation of the road permit etc.) from TECS Roads prior to work commencing. These consents may require additional work and/or introduce additional specifications and you are therefore advised to contact your local TECS Roads office for further guidance at the earliest opportunity.

Failure to comply with access, parking and drainage infrastructure requirements may endanger road users, affect the safety and free-flow of traffic and is likely to result in enforcement action being taken against you under both the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 and the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984.

Further information on the Council's roads standards can be found at: <http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourenvironment/roadsandtransport>

Application forms and guidance notes for access-related consents can be downloaded from:

<http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourenvironment/roadsandtransport/roads/Applicationformsforroadoccupation.htm>

Mud and Debris on Road

Please note that it is an offence under Section 95 of the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 to allow mud or any other material to be deposited, and thereafter remain, on a public road from any vehicle or development site. You must, therefore, put in place a strategy for dealing with any material deposited on the public road network and maintain this until development is complete.

Insert other appropriate notes/delete any not relevant

Trunk Roads

The granting of planning consent does not carry with it the right to carry out works within the trunk road boundary and that permission must be granted by Transport Scotland Trunk Road and Bus Operations. Where any works are required on the trunk road, contact details are provided on Transport Scotland's response to the planning authority which is available on the Council's planning portal.

Trunk road modification works shall, in all respects, comply with the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges and the Specification for Highway Works published by HMSO. The developer shall issue a certificate to that effect, signed by the design organisation.

Trunk road modifications shall, in all respects, be designed and constructed to arrangements that comply with the Disability Discrimination Act: Good Practice Guide for Roads published by Transport Scotland. The developer shall provide written confirmation of this signed by the design organisation.

Construction and Environmental Management Documents

The Planning Authority expects the Developer's Contractor to submit / be fully involved with CEMP information as part of the discharge of any CEMD condition. This should avoid the re-submission of the principles of construction and environmental management measures but focus on site specific details. The planning authority will not support the discharge of any CEMP condition without the specific detail such as plans and drawings being submitted. The use of maps and plans can communicate what is proposed better than text so it encourages the use of plans, drawings and photographs wherever possible. This is usually best undertaken by contractors who are familiar with the CEMP process and environmental regulations and thereby are well able to set out the information in a way that is most useful to all interests.

Signature: Malcolm MacLeod
Designation: Head of Planning and Environment
Author: Ken McCorquodale, Principal Planner.
Background Papers: Documents referred to in report and in case file.
Relevant Plans: Plan 1 – S114001-TG-13-XX-DR-C-0100 REV P06 Location Plan
Plan 2 – S114001-TG-13-XX-DR-C-0101 REV P05 Site Layout Plan
Plan 3 – S114001-TG-13-XX-DR-C-0102 REV P04 Section Plan
Plan 4 - SWITCHING STATION ELEVATION PLAN A0
Plan 5 – Mitigation Plan

Appendix – Letters of Representation

OBJECTORS

1. Mr And Mrs A Morgan, Per Hendersons Chartered Surveyors, East Netherton, Milnathort, Kinross, KY13 OSB, 14/11/16
2. Mr Robert Duncan, The Crofthouse, North Keiss, Keiss, Wick, KWI4XF, 02/11/16
3. David Carter, The Shebeen, 16 Broadhaven Road, Wick, Caithness, KWI 4RF, 31/10/16

SUPPORTERS

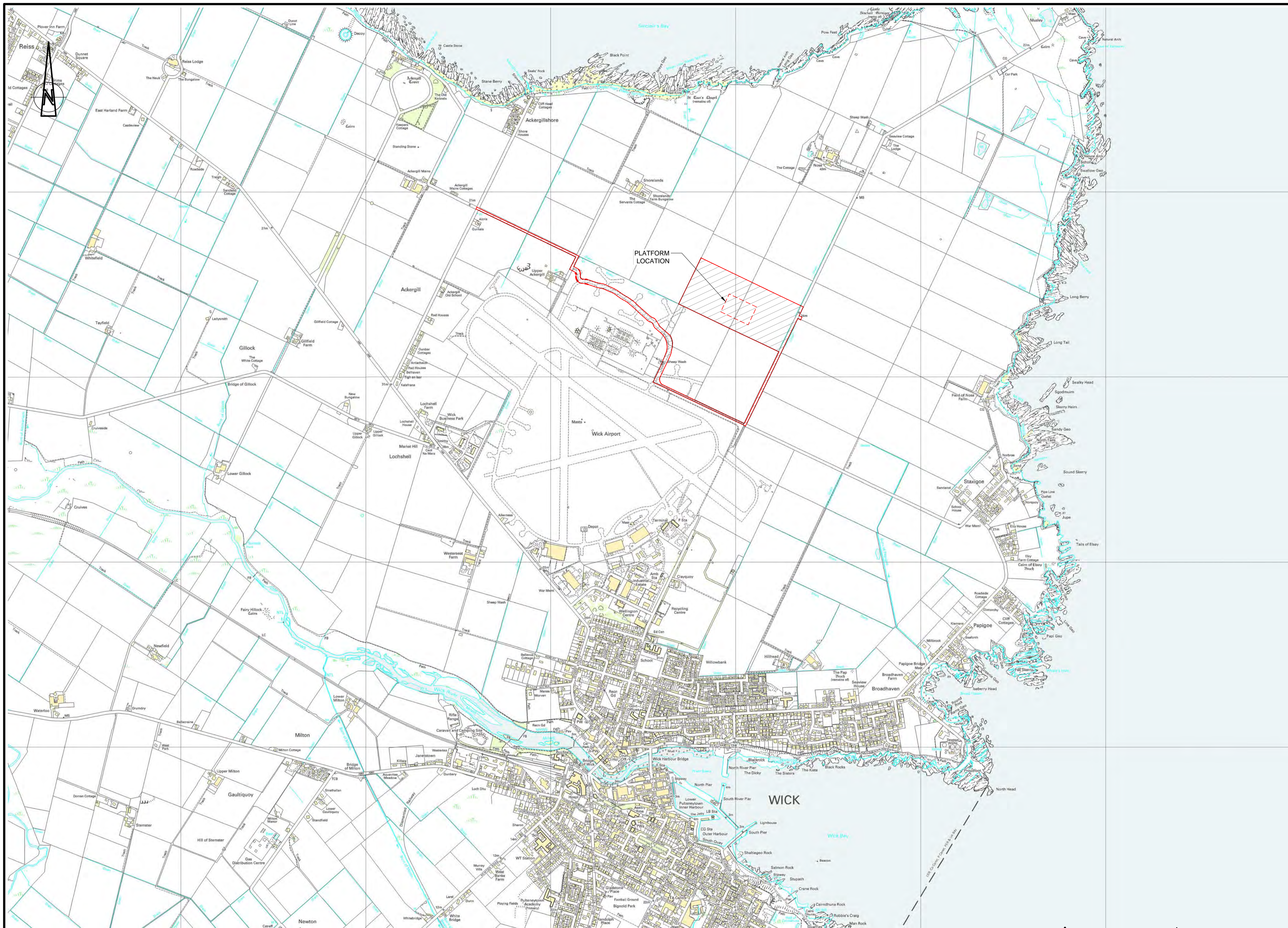
None

REPRESENTATIONS

None


LATE REPRESENTATIONS

None



SITE LOCATION PLAN
SCALE 1:10,000

DO NOT SCALE FROM THIS DRAWING

LEGEND:
 SITE LOCATION
 (TOTAL AREA: 211570m²)

REV	BY	CHKD	APPD	DATE	DESCRIPTION
P06	EMCG	EMCG	RCB	02.09.16	ADDED TOTAL SITE AREA TO LEGEND
P05	EMCG	MES	RCB	26.08.16	MINOR AMENDMENT TO BOUNDARY
P04	RCB	MES	RCB	05.08.16	BOUNDARY UPDATED
P03	EMCG	RCB	MES	03.08.16	BOUNDARY UPDATED
P02	RCB	MES	MES	22.07.16	BOUNDARY UPDATED
P01	EMCG	RB	MS	15.04.16	FIRST ISSUE

CODE	DRAWING STATUS
S0	WORK IN PROGRESS

Tony Gee and Partners LLP
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 183 St Vincent Street
 Glasgow
 G2 5QD
 Tel: 01412 262470
 www.tonygee.com
 Consulting Civil, Structural and Geotechnical Engineers

ON BEHALF OF


CAITHNESS HVDC SWITCHING STATION

SITE LOCATION PLAN

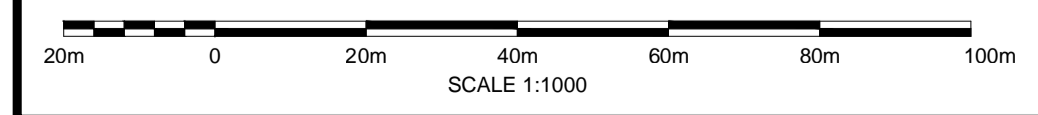
SHEET 1 OF 1

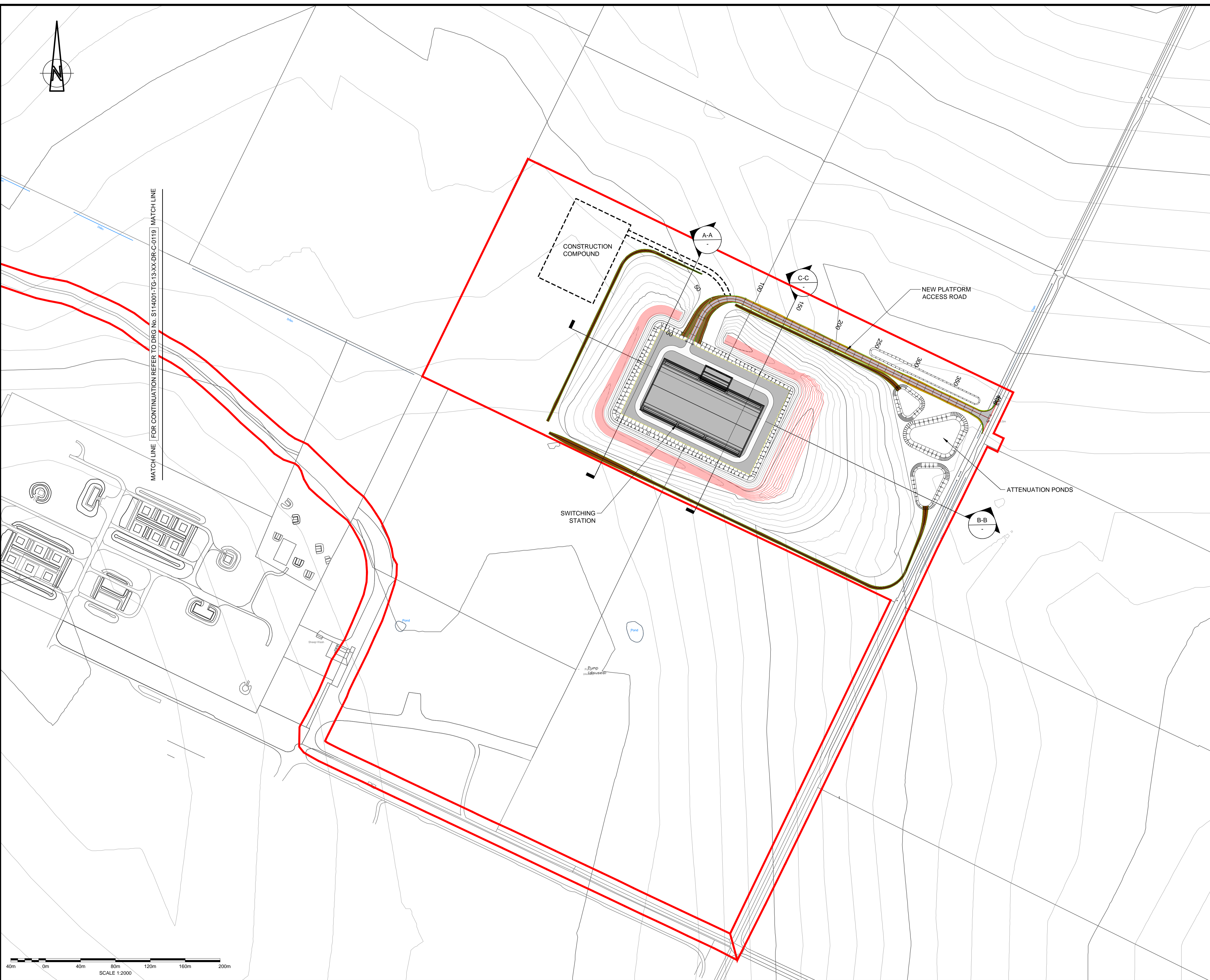
RESIDUAL HAZARD	SUGGESTED CONTROL MEASURE

SIGNIFICANT RESIDUAL HAZARDS

NOTE: The above hazards do not include every hazard or assumption, but identify significant residual construction hazards that are not likely to be obvious to a competent contractor and those that could be difficult to manage effectively. Refer also to the designer's risk documentation.

DRAWING No. S114001-TG-13-XX-DR-C-0100		
DRAWN : RCB	DESIGNED : RCB	REVISION
SCALE : 1:10,000	ORIGINAL SIZE : A1	P06





DO NOT SCALE FROM THIS DRAWING

NOTES

- REFER TO TONY GEE DRAWING NO. S114001-TG-13-XX-DR-C-0119 FOR PLANNING BOUNDARY OF BOMB STORAGE AREA AND UPPER ACKERGILL ROAD.
- REFER TO TONY GEE DRAWING NO. S114001-TG-13-XX-DR-C-0102 FOR SECTIONS

PLANNING BOUNDARY

REV.	BY	CHK'D	APP'D	DATE	DESCRIPTION
P05	EMCG	RCB	MES	26.08.16	MINOR ALTERATION TO PLAN VIEW
P04	RCB	MES	AMF	05.08.16	PLATFORM & BUNDING UPDATED
P03	RCB	MES	MES	22.07.16	PLANNING BOUNDARY ADDED
P02	EMCG	RCB	MES	13.05.16	SECTION B-B EXTENDED
P01	EMCG	RCB	MS	15.04.16	FIRST ISSUE

CODE	DRAWING STATUS
S0	WORK IN PROGRESS

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 G2 5QD
 Tel: 01412 262470
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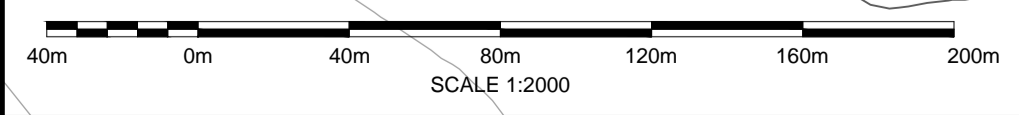
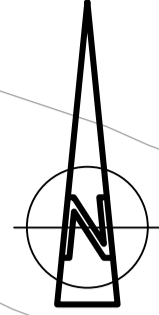
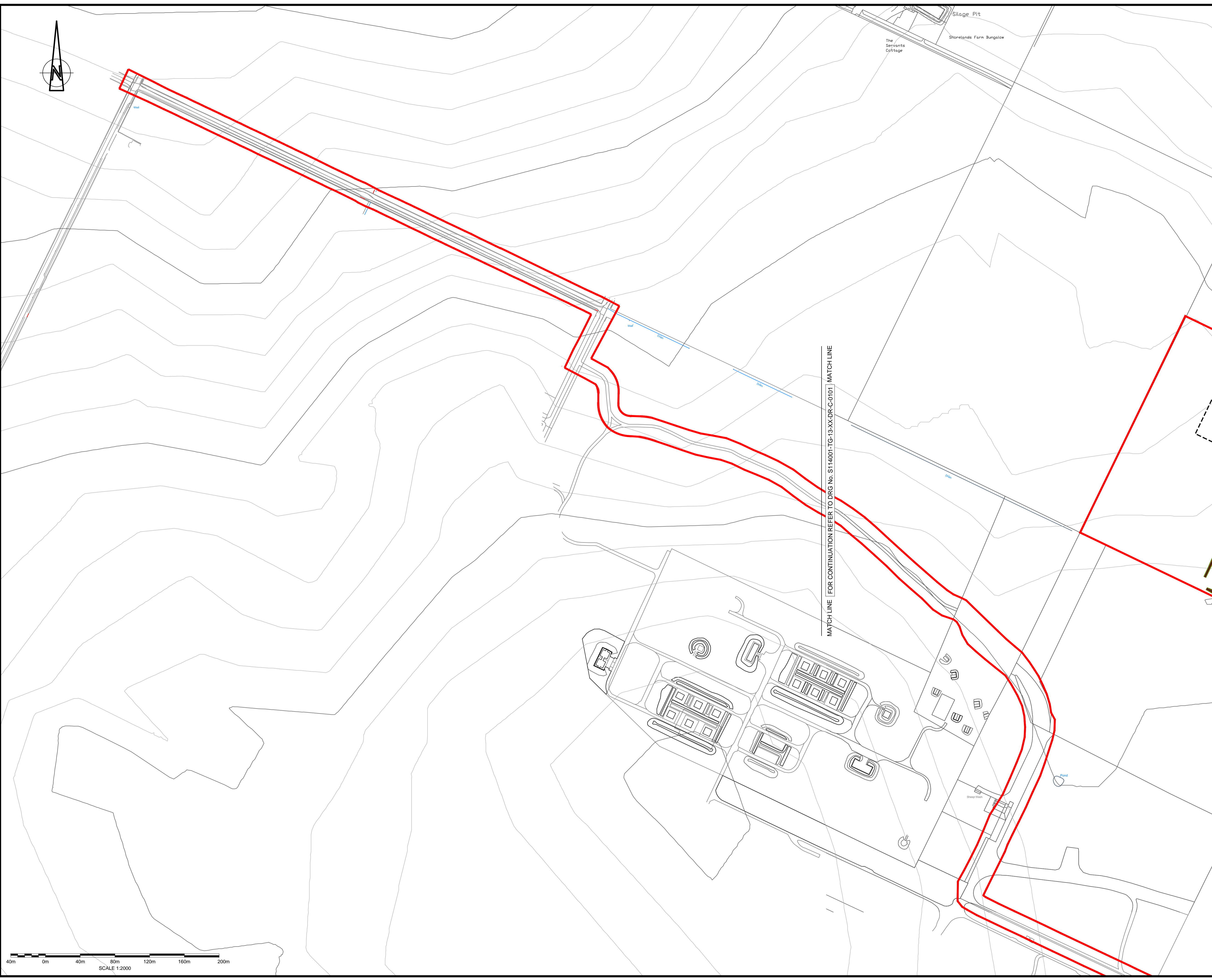
ON BEHALF OF

CAITHNESS HVDC SWITCHING STATION

**SITE PLAN
(PLATFORM & ACCESS ROAD)**

SHEET 1 OF 2

DRAWING No. S114001-TG-13-XX-DR-C-0101		
DRAWN : RS	DESIGNED : RS	REVISION
SCALE : 1:2000	ORIGINAL SIZE : A1	P05



DO NOT SCALE FROM THIS DRAWING

- NOTES
1. REFER TO TONY GEE DRAWING NO. S114001-TG-13-XX-DR-C-0101 FOR SITE PLAN.
 2. REFER TO TONY GEE DRAWING NO. S114001-TG-13-XX-DR-C-0102 FOR SECTIONS

PLANNING BOUNDARY

P01	EMCG	RCB	MES	26.08.16	FIRST ISSUE
REV.	BY	CHK'D	APP'D	DATE	DESCRIPTION

CODE	DRAWING STATUS
S0	WORK IN PROGRESS

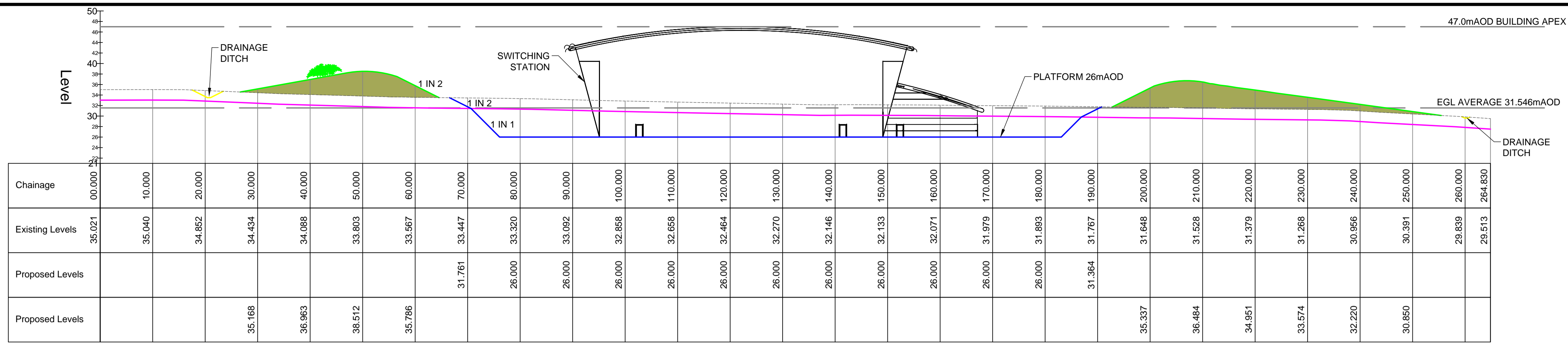
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ON BEHALF OF

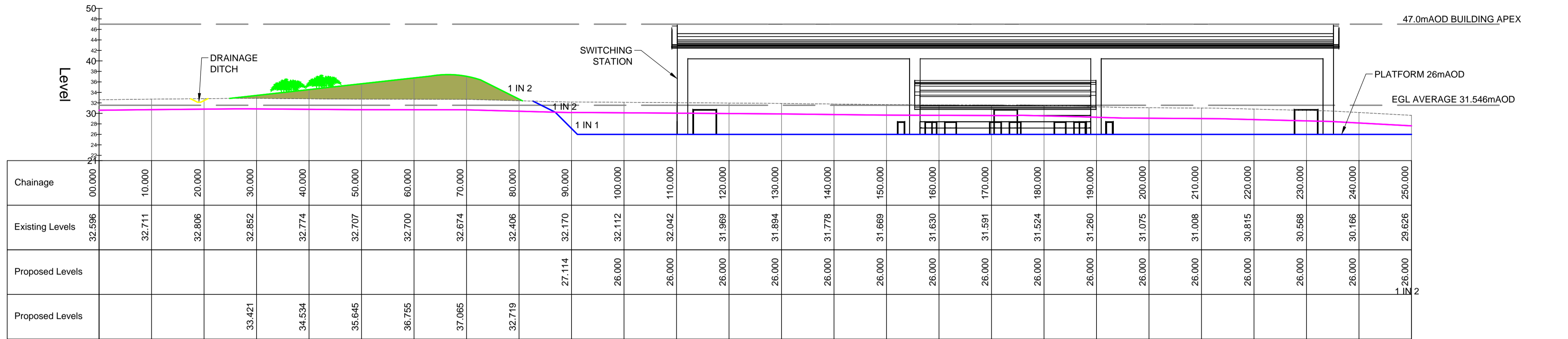
CAITHNESS HVDC SWITCHING STATION

SITE PLAN
 (UPPER ACKERGILL ROAD & BOMB STORAGE AREA)
 SHEET 2 OF 2

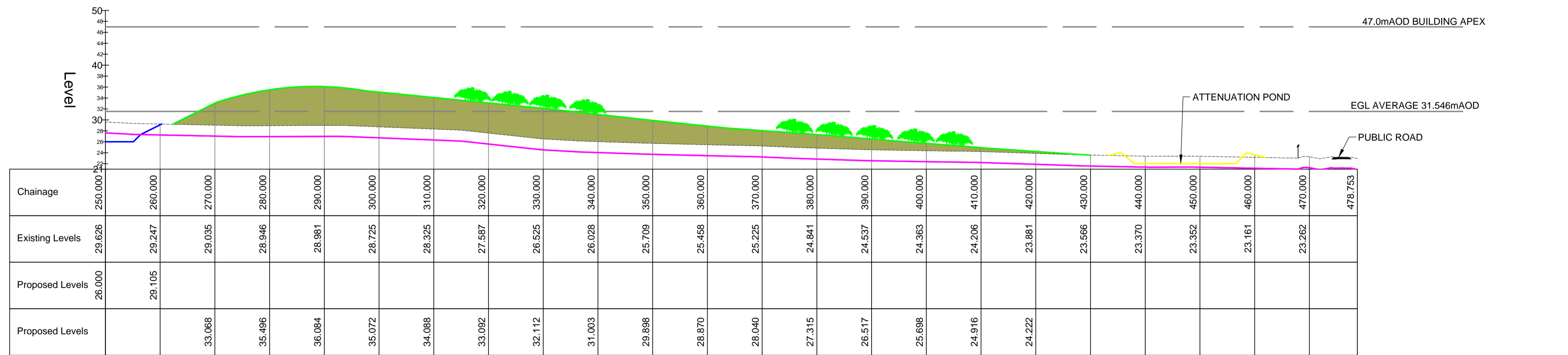
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DRAWN : RS	DESIGNED : RS	REVISION
SCALE : 1:2000	ORIGINAL SIZE : A1	P01



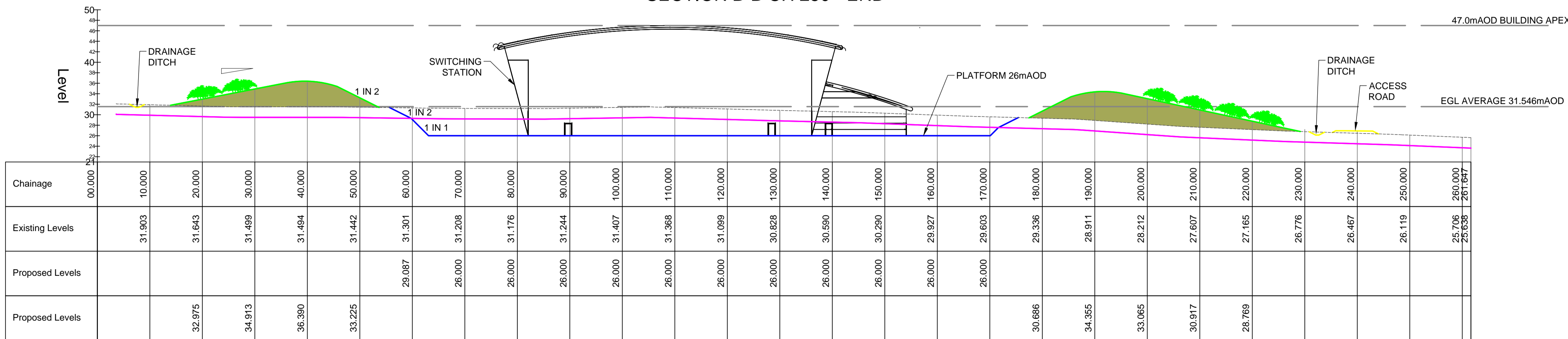
SECTION A-A



SECTION B-B CH 0 - 250



SECTION B-B CH 250 - END



SECTION C-C

DO NOT SCALE FROM THIS DRAWING

- NOTES
- REFER TO TONY GEE DRAWING NO. S114001-TG-13-XX-DR-C-0101 FOR SITE PLAN
 - LANDSCAPING SHOWN IS INDICATIVE ONLY

- LEGEND:
- ASSUMED ROCK LEVEL
 - EXISTING GROUND LEVEL
 - PLATFORM LEVEL
 - LANDSCAPING BUND

REV.	BY	CHK'D	APP'D	DATE	DESCRIPTION
P04	RCB	MES	AMF	05.08.16	PLATFORM & BUNDING UPDATED
P03	RCB	MES	MES	22.07.16	SWITCHING STATION & BUNDING UPDATED
P02	EMCG	RCB	MES	13.05.16	BUNDING ADDED
P01	EMCG	RCB	MES	15.04.16	FIRST ISSUE

CODE	DRAWING STATUS
S0	WORK IN PROGRESS

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ON BEHALF OF

CAITHNESS HVDC SWITCHING STATION

PLATFORM SECTIONS
 SHEET 1 OF 1

DRAWING NO.
S114001-TG-13-XX-DR-C-0102

DRAWN	DESIGNED	REVISION
RCB	RS	P04

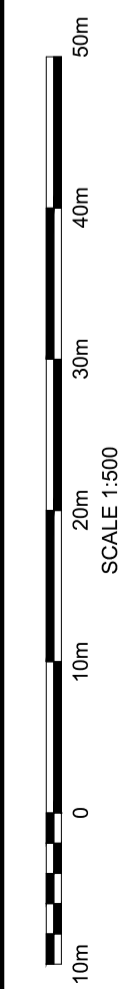
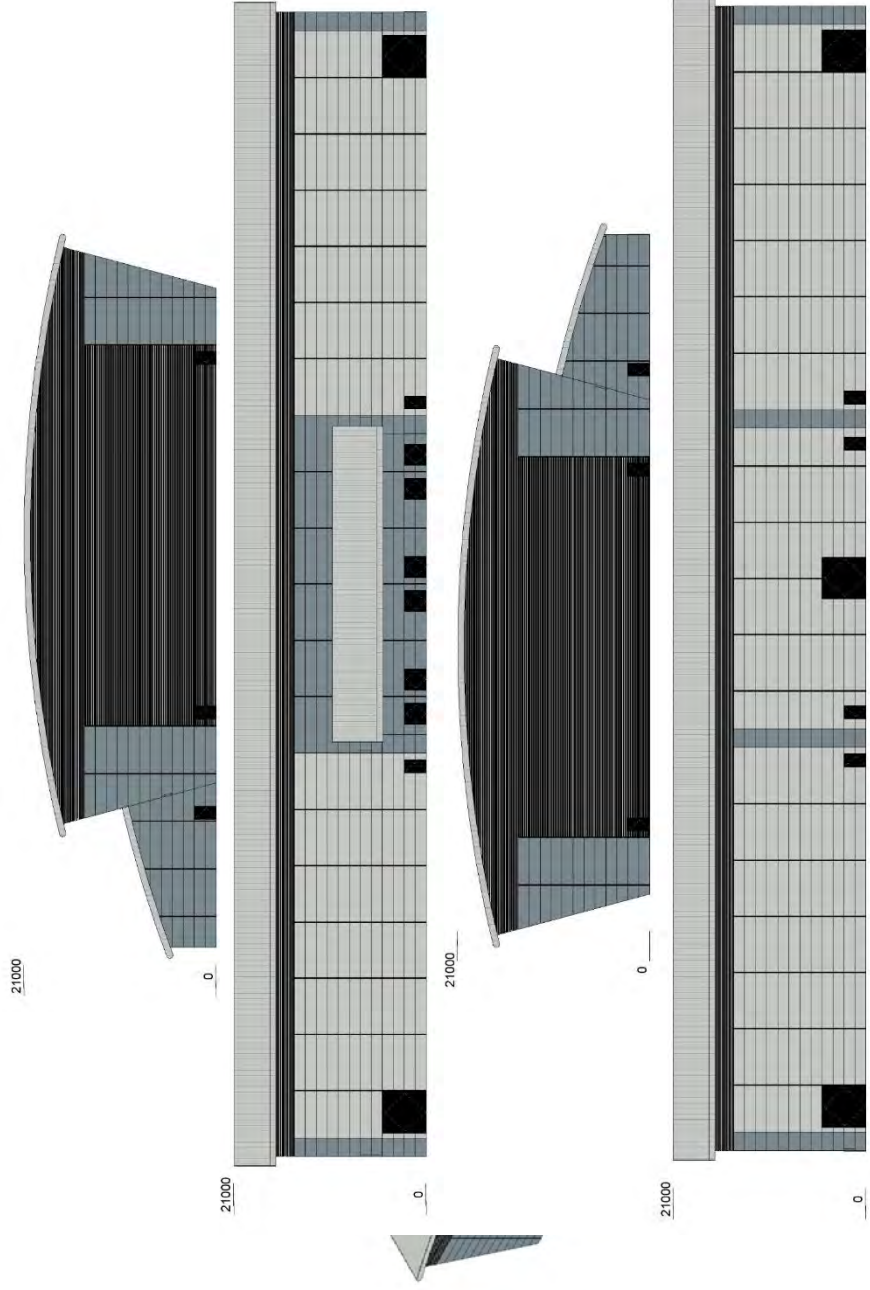
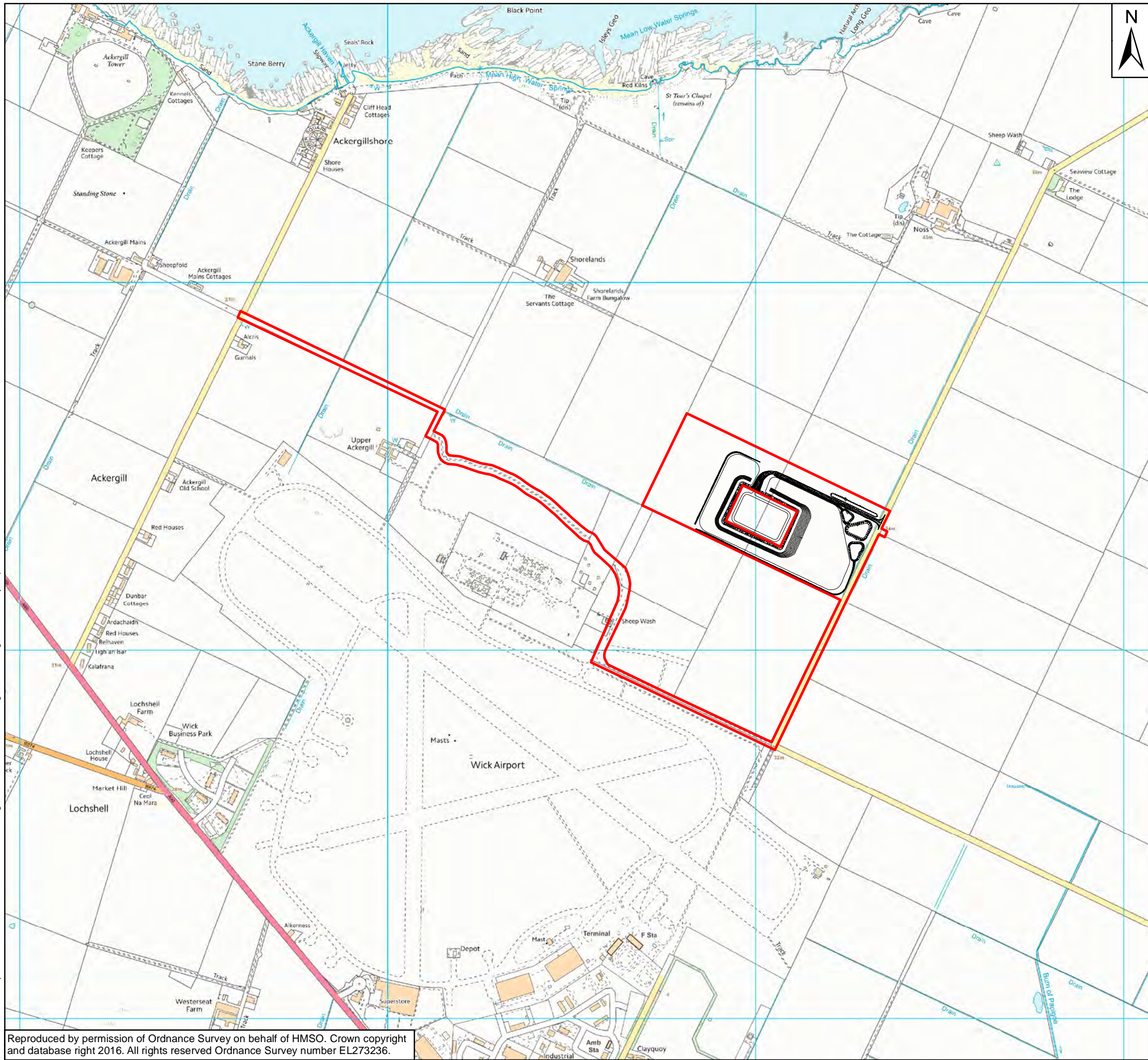


Figure 6: Proposed Design





Key
 Planning Application Boundary

REV	DATE	BY	DESCRIPTION	CHK	APP

DRAWING STATUS: **DRAFT**

WSP | **PARSONS BRINCKERHOFF**

CLIENT: **Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks**

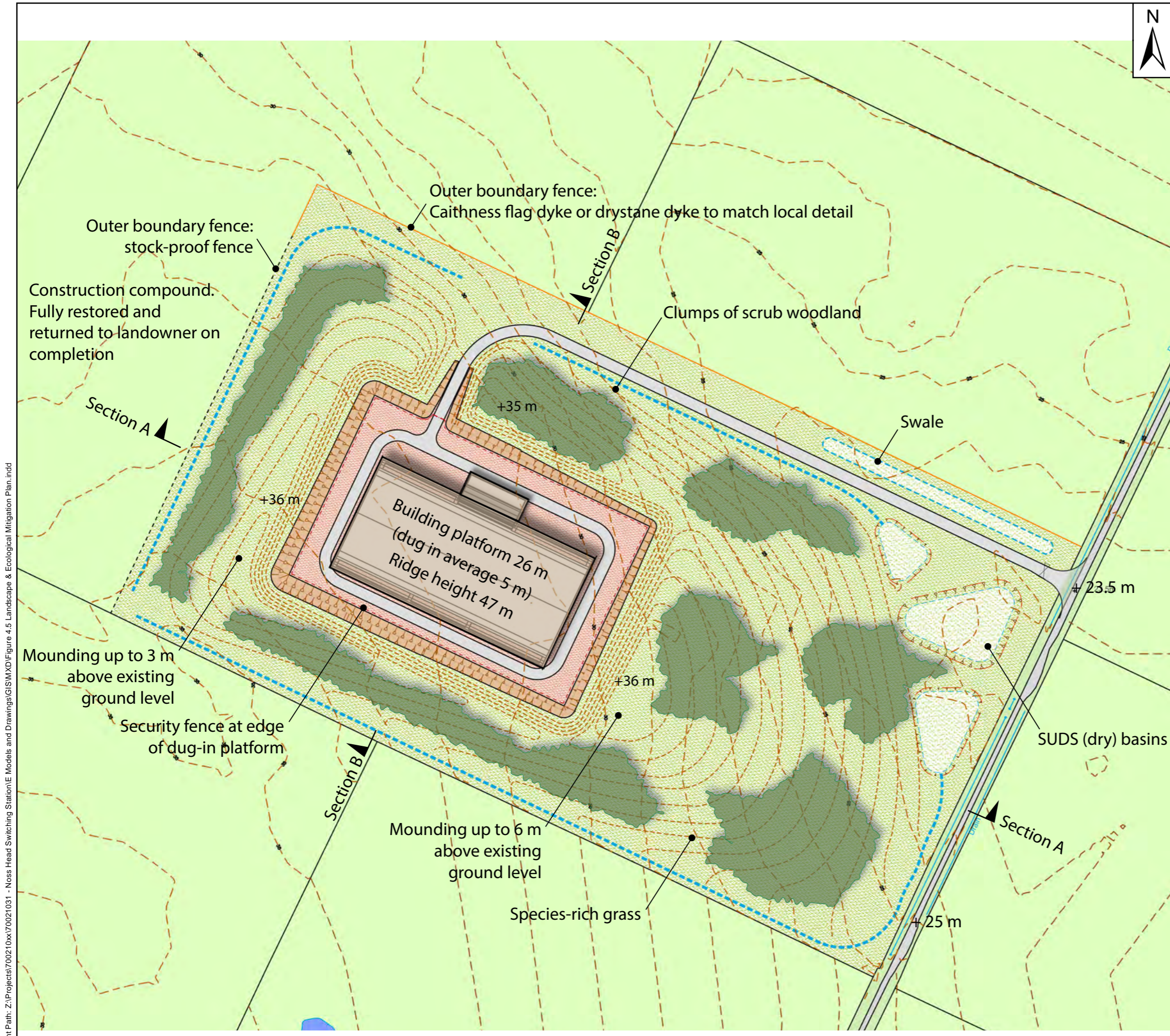
PROJECT: **Caithness HVDC Switching Station**

TITLE: **Site Layout Plan**

SCALE @ A3: 10,218	CHECKED: SM	APPROVED: RL
PROJECT No: 70021031	DRAWN: GH	DATE: September 2016
DRAWING No: Figure 1.2		REV: A

Document Path: Z:\Projects\70021031 - Noss Head Switching Station\I Models and Drawings\GIS\MXD\Figure 1.2 Site Layout plan.mxd

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Mitigation Design Proposals

The Building

The building will be dug into the hillside by between 3m and 8m to reduce its apparent height. Excavated material will be used to form naturalistic bunds all round, with those to the north and east larger and broader to maximise screening of views to Noss Head Farm and the minor road.

Planting

Planting has been selected to enhance biodiversity and withstand the harsh local climate as well as reflect local landscape character.

Tree species will include alder, downy birch, sycamore and rowan, planted as transplants with appropriate tree shelter guards with individual clumps fenced by chestnut paling to provide additional shelter.

Shrub planting will include goat, grey and eared willows, hazel, blackthorn, dog rose, and Japanese rose (*Rosa rugosa*). Non-native species are included because they are known to be locally hardy.

SUDS Area

This area will be formed to a naturalistic form and profile, and seeded with species-rich grassland.

Perimeter Fencing

The outer perimeter of the site, where visible from the minor road, will be fenced with a traditional Caithness flagstone fence to match the local style, with a farm style gate where the access track meets the minor road.

B	27/9/16	GH	Landform to current TGP design	AJF	RL
A	9/9/16	GH	Draft Issue	AJF	RL
REV	DATE	BY	DESCRIPTION	CHK	APP

DRAWING STATUS: DRAFT



CLIENT:

PROJECT: Caithness HVDC Switching Station

TITLE: Landscape and Ecological Mitigation Plan

SCALE @ A3: 2,000	CHECKED: AJF	APPROVED: RL
PROJECT No: 70021031	DRAWN: GH	DATE: September 2016

DRAWING No: Figure 4.5 REV: B

Document Path: Z:\Projects\70021031 - Noss Head Switching Station\Drawings\GIS\MD\Figure 4.5 Landscape & Ecological Mitigation Plan.indd



Key

- Location of the Proposed Development
- 3km Study Area

The coloured areas show the bare ground zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV): the area from which the Proposed Development would theoretically be visible.

- ZTV of notional eaves height (16m)
Area from which at least the topmost 5m or more of the building may be seen
- ZTV of top of roof (21m)
Area from which only the topmost 5m or less of the building may be seen

Notes:

Based on a building height of 21m and a viewer eye height of 1.6m.

This is a bare ground ZTV: it does not take account of any screening provided by vegetation, buildings, walls etc.

REV	DATE	BY	DESCRIPTION	CHK	APP

DRAWING STATUS: DRAFT

WSP | **PARSONS BRINCKERHOFF**

CLIENT: **Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks**

PROJECT: Caithness HVDC Switching Station

TITLE: Zone of Theoretical Visibility

SCALE @ A3: 25,000	CHECKED: AJF	APPROVED: RL
PROJECT No: 70021031	DRAWN: GH	DATE: August 2016
DRAWING No: Figure 4.1		REV: A

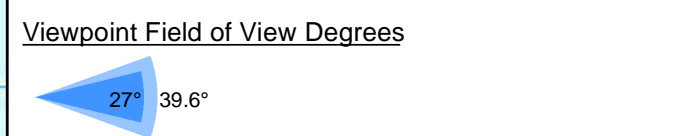
Document Path: Z:\Projects\70021031 - Noss Head Switching Station\I Models and Drawings\GIS\XDF\Figure 4.1 - Zone of Theoretical Visibility.mxd

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- Key**
- Planning Application Boundary
 - 3km Study Area
 - Viewpoint Locations

- Viewpoint Information**
- Viewpoint 1: North of Thrumster
Co-ordinates: 333964, 945709
Distance to Site: 8km
- Viewpoint 2: South East of Reiss
Co-ordinates: 334326, 954050
Distance to Site: 2.8km
- Viewpoint 3: Ackergill
Co-ordinates: 335556, 953782
Distance to Site: 1.6km
- Viewpoint 4: Monument at Staxigoe
Co-ordinates: 338201, 952209
Distance to Site: 1.6km
- Viewpoint 5: Crossroads at Minor Road North East of Wick Airport
Co-ordinates: 337051, 952758
Distance to Site: 600m
- Viewpoint 6: Noss Head Farm Road End
Co-ordinates: 337691, 954085
Distance to Site: 800m



A	9/9/16	GH	Draft Issue	AJF	RL
REV	DATE	BY	DESCRIPTION	CHK	APP

DRAWING STATUS: DRAFT



CLIENT: Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks

PROJECT: Caithness HVDC Switching Station

TITLE: Viewpoint Location Plan

SCALE @ A3:	CHECKED:	APPROVED:
28,000	AJF	RL
PROJECT No:	DRAWN:	DATE:
70021031	GH	September 2016

DRAWING No: Figure 4.3 REV: A

Document Path: Z:\Projects\70021031 - Noss Head Switching Station\E Models and Drawings\GISMXD\Figure 4.3 - Viewpoint Location Plan.mxd

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file: \\uk.wspgroup.com\central_data\Projects\700210xA\70021031 - Noss Head Switching Station\IE Models and Drawings\Report figures

Distance to Proposed Switching Station: 1.6km E Focal Length: 75mm(equivalent) Camera Height: 1.6m Date: 01/06/16

When viewed at a comfortable arm's length (approx. 500mm), this printed image is representative of our detailed central vision, but is not representative of scale and distance.

**Switching Station at Noss Head
Viewpoint 3 Ackergill: proposed
Figure 4.4 i**



file: \\uk.wspgroup.com\central_data\Projects\700210\X\70021031 - Noss Head Switching Station\IE Models and Drawings\Report figures

Distance to Proposed Switching Station: 1.6km NW Focal Length: 75mm(equivalent) Camera Height: 1.6m Date: 01/06/16

When viewed at a comfortable arm's length (approx. 500mm), this printed image is representative of our detailed central vision, but is not representative of scale and distance.

**Switching Station at Noss Head
Viewpoint 4 Monument at Staxigoe: proposed
Figure 4.4 I**



file: \\uk.wspgroup.com\central_data\Projects\700210\X\70021031 - Noss Head Switching Station\IE Models and Drawings\Report figures

Distance to Proposed Switching Station: 600m NW Focal Length: 75mm(equivalent) Camera Height: 1.6m Date: 01/06/16

When viewed at a comfortable arm's length (approx. 500mm), this printed image is representative of our detailed central vision, but is not representative of scale and distance.

Switching Station at Noss Head
Viewpoint 5 Crossroads at minor road NE of Wick Airport: proposed
Figure 4.4 o



Distance to Proposed Switching Station: 800m S Focal Length: 75mm(equivalent) Camera Height: 1.6m Date: 01/06/16

When viewed at a comfortable arm's length (approx. 500mm), this printed image is representative of our detailed central vision, but is not representative of scale and distance.

**Switching Station at Noss Head
Viewpoint 6 Noss Farm road end: proposed
Figure 4.4 r**