

Agenda Item	6.9
Report No	PLS 045/18

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: South Planning Applications Committee
Date: 12 June 2018
Report Title: 18/00575/FUL: The Highland Council
Inverness High School, Montague Row, Inverness
Report By: Area Planning Manager – South/Major Developments

Purpose/Executive Summary

Description: Construction of energy centre containing biomass boilers, storage silo and an education corridor.
Ward: 13 - Inverness West

Development category: Local Development

Reason referred to Committee: Representations received from 5 different households

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.

Recommendation

Members are asked to agree the recommendation to **Grant** planning permission as set out in section 11 of the report.

1. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 1.1 The application is to erect a free standing energy centre. This consists of a biomass boiler, with a fuel silo, fuel store, twin stainless steel flue, and an education corridor running alongside.
- 1.2 The main building will be 7.75m wide x 14.4m long, with the curved fuel silo projecting to take the overall length to 17m. The education corridor will run alongside part of the silo, fuel store, and plant room, and will be 16.4m in length x 2.1m in width.
- 1.3 The silo will be 4.5m high, the flues will be 10m high, and the plant room will be 3.8m high to the ridge reducing to 3.5m at eaves.
- 1.4 The silo will be finished in vertical larch board, the main building will be finished in harl, and the education corridor will be a lean-to polycarbonate roof with a stainless steel wire trellis forming the sides of the enclosure, and an access gate on both ends. It is envisaged that climbing plants will grow up the trellis.
- 1.5 Pre Application Consultation: Informal discussions took place prior to the submission of the application.
- 1.6 Supporting Information: Air quality impact assessment; biomass boiler information; noise impact assessment.
- 1.7 Variations: None

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 Inverness High School occupies a site lying between Dochfour Drive to the west, Rangemore Road to the north, and Mongague Row to the east. The existing buildings are all clustered in the northern part of the site, with the south part of the school grounds towards Bruce Gardens in use as playing fields.
- 2.2 The proposed energy centre will be sited to the rear (west) of the existing Janitor's House, and the north of the main car park next to the main school entrance. A further area of informal overspill parking lies to the west of the proposed building, and houses on Rangemore Road lie immediately to the north of the school boundary. At its closest point, the building will be 12m from this boundary with the housing, and in excess of 31m from the rear of the nearest house on Rangemore Road.
- 2.3 The Janitor's house is a single storey bungalow which backs onto the site. The education corridor will run along the length of the proposed structure on the elevation facing the Janitor's house. It will be 7.7m from the boundary with the Janitor's house rear garden, and approx. 18m from the bungalow at its closest point. There is an existing single storey storage building approximately 3.5m from the boundary with the Janitor's house rear garden, which will be demolished to facilitate the proposed energy centre.

- 2.4 The site is currently occupied in part by a disused single storey store (to be demolished), and by an area of grass adjacent to informal overspill car parking. A further storage building adjacent to the north boundary will be retained.

3. PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 17/00961/FUL Construction of single storey clad energy Application centre containing biomass boilers, storage withdrawn silos, back up gas boilers and electrical switch room.

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- 4.1 Advertised: development affecting the setting of a Listed Building

Date Advertised: 16/03/18

Representation deadline: 06/04/18

Timeous representations: 8 representations received (5 different addresses)

- 4.2 Material considerations raised are summarised as follows:

- a) Proximity of flues to houses on Rangemore Road and Montague Row
- b) Boiler exhaust adversely impacting on air quality
- c) Houses are taller than stated in the air quality assessment, and this could adversely impact upon dispersal of particles from the flue
- d) Emissions could contain carcinogenic particles
- e) Boiler should be sited within the existing building and use the existing chimney
- f) Loss of energy due to distance from boiler to main school building
- g) Alternative sources of energy should be utilised – solar, ground source heat pumps, and electricity from wind, hydro and tidal schemes
- h) Natural gas boiler and negotiated pricing tariff would be better
- i) Cycle of felling and re-growing trees might be too long to keep it sustainable
- j) Detrimental impact upon rear garden grounds of adjoining houses
- k) Noise from the boiler
- l) Noise from fuel deliveries, especially at night
- m) Vibration from boiler
- n) Anguish caused by the constant noise adversely impacting on mental health
- o) Height of structure will dominate and loom over the existing Janitor's bungalow
- p) Loss of light and overshadowing of Janitor's bungalow and rear garden grounds
- q) Should be repositioned to reduce impact on neighbouring residents
- r) Buildings are designed to be self heating and can cause spontaneous combustion of fuel materials, posing a danger to people close by.
- s) Smell from the boiler
- t) Emissions are assessed as being within acceptable levels, but there is insufficient accumulated long term data available about the effects of PM10 and PM2.5 particles on health
- u) Will have a detrimental impact on people with an existing lung condition and exacerbate the lung problems
- v) Different pellets could be burned in the boiler which result in greater emissions

- w) Industrial character of boiler building and flues is out of character with residential area
- x) Reduced property values

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.

5. CONSULTATIONS

5.1 **Environmental Health:** The proposal involves the installation of plant in close proximity to existing housing. Noise may breach the required design standards at one or more noise sensitive properties; no objections subject to additional mitigation being implemented – 44mm solid core doors with seals instead of louvre doors to the building; acoustic louvres to an opening on the side of the biomass instead of open grilles; attenuators within the biomass plant flues.

The LAQM screening tool compares predicted emissions from the flues with a threshold emission rate. The proposal passes through the screen based on 10m flues, for both the height of buildings as stated in the report and the height claimed by a local resident.

Dispersion modelling has also been carried out. This considers local topography, the built environment around the flues, and the prevailing wind conditions. This assessment has determined the 10m flue height as being a compromise of reducing pollutant concentrations further against increased visual impact. If an incorrect building height has been fed into the model this could influence the detail of the outcome. However, given the outcome of the more conservative screening report, it seems likely that this would not affect the overall assessment outcome.

Using lower quality fuel is likely to increase emissions. However, both the screening process and the air quality modelling assessment are based upon the RHI emission limits. The actual test results for the candidate boiler would be lower than the RHI limits, otherwise RHI use of the boilers could not be claimed.

The assessments also assume that the boilers will operate continuously at full capacity which is unlikely to occur in reality, and thus have an element of conservatism built in. There is some scope to allow for higher emissions without changing the outcome of the assessment.

5.2 **Historic Environment Team:** No significant issues in Conservation terms.

6. DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICY

The following policies are relevant to the assessment of the application

6.1 **Highland Wide Local Development Plan 2012**

28 - Sustainable Design

34 - Settlement Development Areas

57 - Natural, Built & Cultural Heritage

73 - Air Quality

6.2 Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan 2015

IN28 – Inverness High School. Short term the site is safeguarded for education purposes; respect for the Listed building and its setting; retention and possible expansion of public parking provision; improved road access from adjoining roads.

7. OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

7.1 Highland Council Supplementary Planning Policy Guidance

Highland Historic Environment Strategy (Jan 2013)

7.2 Scottish Government Planning Policy and Guidance

Scottish Planning Policy 2014

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 Section 14 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 states that, "In considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works, the planning authority shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses".

Determining Issues

8.3 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.

Planning Considerations

8.4 The key considerations in this case are:

- a) compliance with the development plan and other planning policy
- b) air quality
- c) noise
- d) visual impact/setting of the listed building
- e) any other material considerations.

Development plan/other planning policy

8.5 Policy IN28 of the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan identifies that Inverness High School is safeguarded for education purposes. This also requires any development to respect the listed building and its setting, to retain and if possible expand the public parking provision, and improve the access from

adjoining roads.

- 8.6 The proposed energy centre is to facilitate the heating of the school buildings, and therefore supports the existing education function. It lies partly within a grassed area adjacent to the informal overspill parking, but is outwith the main car park. It therefore has no impact upon the main car park, nor on the informal overspill parking area. No alterations to the access are included as part of the proposal.
- 8.7 Subject to safeguarding the setting of the listed building and individual and community residential amenity the proposal would comply with the development plan.

Air Quality

- 8.8 The main pollutants from wood combustion are oxides of nitrogen, carbon monoxide, and fine particulate matter.
- 8.9 As an objector correctly points out, oxides of nitrogen are associated with lung damage and enhanced sensitivity to allergens. However, an air quality assessment has been carried out, which demonstrates that the emissions will not compromise air quality standard attainment.
- 8.10 Combustion of solid fuel will generally release some form of particulate matter. Particle size will determine the potential impact. Generally, the finer the particulate, the further it can travel into the human respiratory system. PM10 and PM25 are subject to monitoring in this regard.
- 8.11 Whilst it is correct that a lower quality fuel could lead to an increase in emissions, there is scope for higher emissions without changing the outcome of the air quality assessment.
- 8.12 The Air Quality Impact Assessment submitted in support of the application has been supplied to Environmental Health. They have run the data from it through a screening tool, and found that air quality meets the required standards even if the houses are 8.5m in height, as claimed by an objector, instead of the 6.5m in height used in the Assessment.
- 8.13 Environmental Health is content that the emissions from the proposed energy centre will be within the required standards, and that air quality will not be substantially influenced by the proposal.

Noise

- 8.14 Environmental Health recommend that all plant, machinery and equipment associated with the development must operate at not more than NR20 when measured or calculated within the bedroom of any noise-sensitive premises with windows open for ventilation purposes, or that the background noise level must not be exceeded by more than 5dB(A) including any characteristics penalty. A condition can be used to require compliance with this standard.
- 8.15 In order to ensure that the development should operate within this standard, additional mitigation is proposed, in the form of solid doors (instead of louvre

doors), acoustic louvres to an opening on the side of the biomass instead of open grilles, and attenuators within the biomass plant flues.

- 8.16 The applicant has confirmed that the fuel deliveries can be scheduled to suit the school and comply with anti-social noise requirements.
- 8.17 The proposed energy centre therefore is satisfactory in terms of noise requirements.

Visual Impact

- 8.18 The design of the building reflects its proposed function as an energy centre. It will be orientated with the silo towards the car park / main school building, the plant room towards the houses on Rangemore Road, and side elevations facing the Janitor's House and the informal parking area. The education corridor will be along the side elevation towards the Janitor's House. The flues will be located towards the centre of the structure, between the silo and the plant room. As it will be located to the side / rear of the listed building and viewed in the context of existing ancillary/ outbuildings and not impact upon the principle elevation, it is considered that there will be no significant adverse effect on the setting of the listed building.
- 8.19 The use of different roof heights for the different elements of the structure, and the use of timber for the silo and harl for the main structure breaks up the massing, denotes each function, and introduces visual interest to the elevations.
- 8.20 The aspect towards the houses on Rangemore Road is the gable of the plant room, with the top of the silo and the flues visible above. This will be 3.5m high to eaves, and 3.84m high to ridge, and 7.75m in width. Therefore, this will be seen primarily as a single storey structure. It will be set in from the boundary of the houses on Rangemore Road by at least 12m, which will help to lessen the visual impact and provide space to absorb it into its setting. The lean-to education corridor with light weight materials will increase the overall width by 2.1m, and will have a minimal impact upon the overall elevation.
- 8.21 The twin flue will be seen rising above the remainder of the structure, to an overall height of 10m. At its closest point, the flue will be 22.5m from the boundary with the houses on Rangemore Road, and 41.8m from the rear of the nearest Rangemore Road house itself. This is a substantial height, but the lower portion will be screened by the energy centre building / silo, and its location centrally within the structure will help to site it in a context which breaks up views of the flue, and thus helps to minimise its visual impact. Any lesser height will disproportionately increase the impact of the emissions upon air quality and is accordingly not recommended.
- 8.22 There is sufficient separation between the houses on Rangemore Road and the proposed building and flue for the massing to not be overwhelming, and for the proposal to be satisfactorily absorbed into the site.
- 8.23 The proposed biomass building will be in closer proximity to the Janitor's House, being only 7.75m from the rear garden boundary, and 18m from the rear of the house at its closest point. There is an existing dilapidated storage building running

alongside the rear boundary with the Janitor's House, which will be demolished as part of this proposal. This is located approximately 3.6m from the boundary. It is, however, lower than the proposed energy centre, being approximately 2.4m to its highest point. The energy centre, although sited further from the Janitor's House, will be higher, with roof lines ranging from 2.7m (education corridor), to 3.5m (plant room), 4.5m (silo) and 10m (flues). The rear boundary fence to the Janitor's House is currently 1.88m in height.

- 8.24 The varying roof line of the different aspects of the energy centre and its set back behind the 'living screen' of the education corridor, serve to break up this elevation, and reduce the visual impact. The heights proposed are not considered excessive or unduly prominent, and the building is not assessed as dominating or looming over the Janitor's House. A condition should however be used to require the planting to be carried out and maintained.

Other material considerations

- 8.25 The energy centre is generally reflective of a single storey building in size. Combined with the distance from the boundaries with neighbouring houses, a material loss of daylight or sunlight should not occur.
- 8.26 There should be no discernible vibration from the proposed energy centre. Similarly there should be no smell from the emissions.
- 8.27 There are no other material considerations.

Non-material considerations

- 8.28 The issue of whether this is a sustainable method of heating the school, and whether alternative sources of energy would be more appropriate, is not a material planning consideration. The application stands to be assessed as submitted.
- 8.29 Similarly, whether this is the optimum siting for the boiler is not a material planning consideration. Again, the application stands to be assessed as submitted.
- 8.30 Loss of property value is again not a material planning consideration.

Matters to be secured by Section 75 Agreement

- 8.31 None

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 The energy centre will be located to the side / rear of the listed building. It is seen in the context of existing ancillary/ outbuildings, and has no impact upon the principle elevation. It will replace an existing dilapidated store, and will thus tidy up this area of the school grounds. The design and appearance reflects the proposed function as an energy centre and does not compete with or detract from the design and setting of the listed building. The proposal complies with Policy IN28 of the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan, since the proposal facilitates the educational use of the site, will not adversely impact upon the Historic Environment, and will not

impact upon parking provision.

- 9.2 Air quality assessments and noise impact assessments have been carried out, and demonstrate that the proposal will comply with the required standards.
- 9.3 The visual impact of the proposed energy centre on the neighbouring houses, and the impact upon daylighting and sunlight enjoyed by the neighbouring houses is assessed as acceptable.
- 9.4 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. IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 Resource: Not applicable
- 10.2 Legal: Not applicable
- 10.3 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural): Not applicable
- 10.4 Climate Change/Carbon Clever: Not applicable
- 10.5 Risk: Not applicable
- 10.6 Gaelic: Not applicable

11. RECOMMENDATION

Action required before decision issued n

Subject to the above, it is recommended that planning permission be **GRANTED**, subject to the following:

Conditions and Reasons

1. All plant, machinery and equipment associated with this development shall be so installed, maintained and operated such that either of the following standards are met:
 - any associated operating noise must not exceed NR 20 when measured or calculated within the bedroom of any noise-sensitive premises with windows open for ventilation purposes
 - the operating noise Rating level must not exceed the Background noise level by more than 5dB(A) including any characteristics penalty. Terms and measurements to be in accordance with BS 4142:2014 Methods for Rating Industrial & Commercial Sound.

Reason: In order to safeguard the amenity of neighbouring properties and occupants.

2. No development shall commence until details of a scheme of soft landscaping works has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority. Details of the scheme shall include :
 - i. all soft landscaping and planting works, including plans and schedules showing the location species and size of each plant and planting densities;
 - ii. a programme for preparation, completion and subsequent on-going maintenance and protection of all landscaping works.

Landscaping works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved scheme. All planting, seeding or turfing as may be comprised in the approved details shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding seasons following the commencement of development, unless otherwise stated in the approved scheme.

Any plants which within a period of five years from the completion of the development die, for whatever reason are removed or damaged shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of the same size and species.

Reason: In order to ensure that a high standard of landscaping is achieved, appropriate to the location of the site.

3. There shall be no vehicle deliveries to, or the unloading of delivery vehicles within, the application site outwith the hours of 08:00 to 18:00 inclusive Monday – Friday, 08:00 to 13:00 inclusive on Saturdays, and not at all on Sundays, unless otherwise approved in writing by the Planning Authority as an exceptional instance for operating outwith these hours.

Reason: In order to safeguard the amenity of neighbouring properties and occupants.

4. Prior to the first operation of the energy centre hereby permitted, all external access doors shall be 44mm solid core doors with seals, acoustic louvres shall be fitted to openings on the side of the biomass instead of open grilles, and attenuators shall be fitted within the biomass plant flues, all as per the mitigation recommended in 5.08 of the Noise Impact Assessment ref 1287 001PC V1 dated 19th April 2018 prepared by CSP Acoustics and thereafter maintained as such.

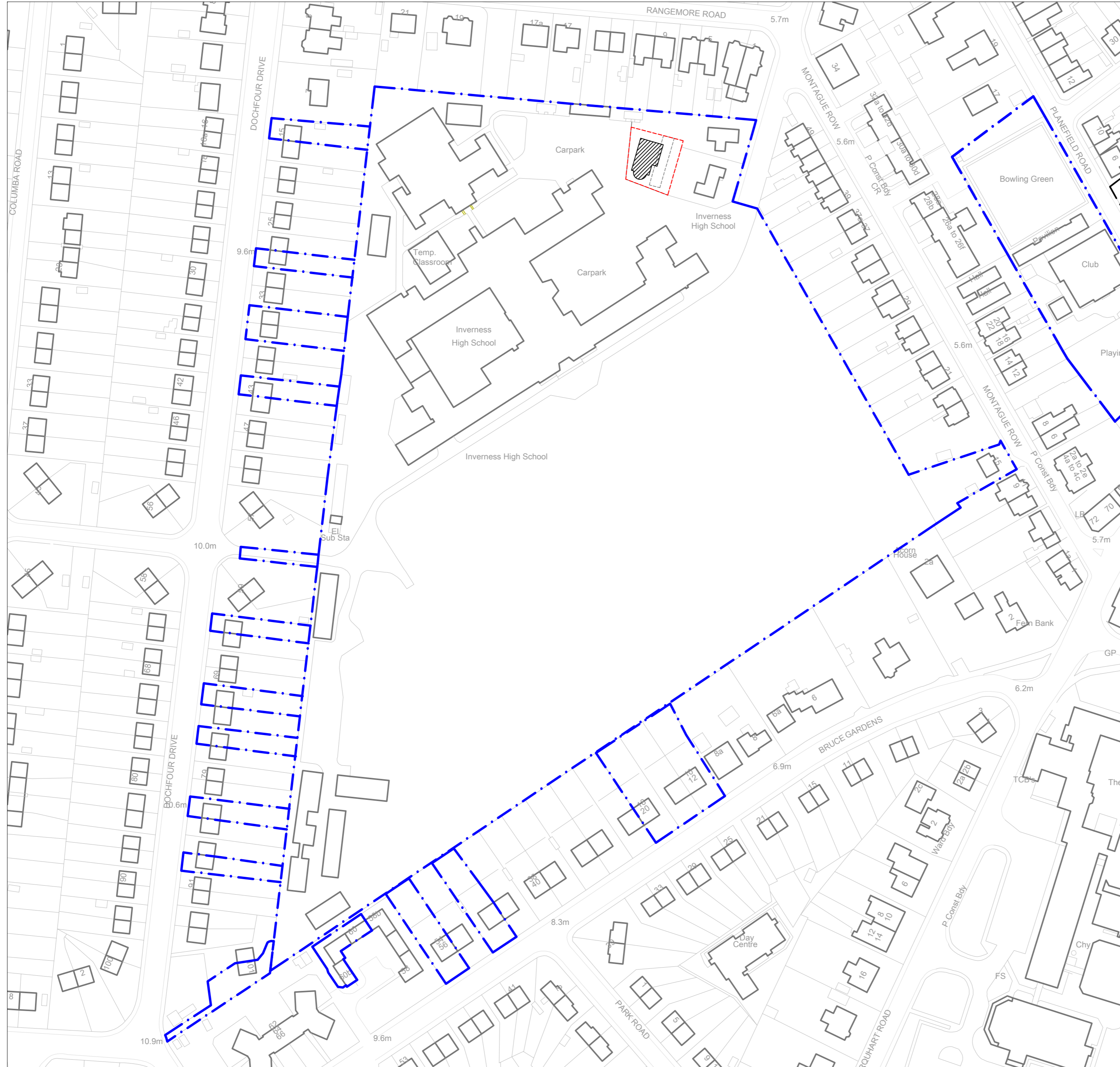
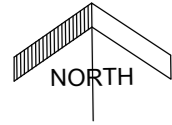
Reason : In order to safeguard the amenity of neighbouring properties and occupants.

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.

Signature: Nicola Drummond
Designation: Area Planning Manager – South/Major Developments
Author: Susan Hadfield
Background Papers: Documents referred to in report and in case file.
Relevant Plans: Plan 1 - Location Plan CAL 15098 A(00) 050 Rev A
Plan 2 - Site Layout Plan CAL 15098 A(00) 051 Rev C
Plan 3 - Proposed Site Layout Plan CAL 15098 A(00) 054 Rev C
Plan 4 - Proposed Biomass Building CAL 15098 A(00) 055 Rev B
Supporting Information - CSP Acoustics Noise Impact Assessment
1287 001PC V1

Supporting Information - Air Quality Impact Assessment of a Biomass
Combustion Plant Installation 170831 Rev1

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Location Plan (Scale 1:1250)
Application site outlined in red
Scale 1=1250

Rev.	Purpose of issue.	By	Checked	Date
A	PLANNING	SB	AM	08.02.18

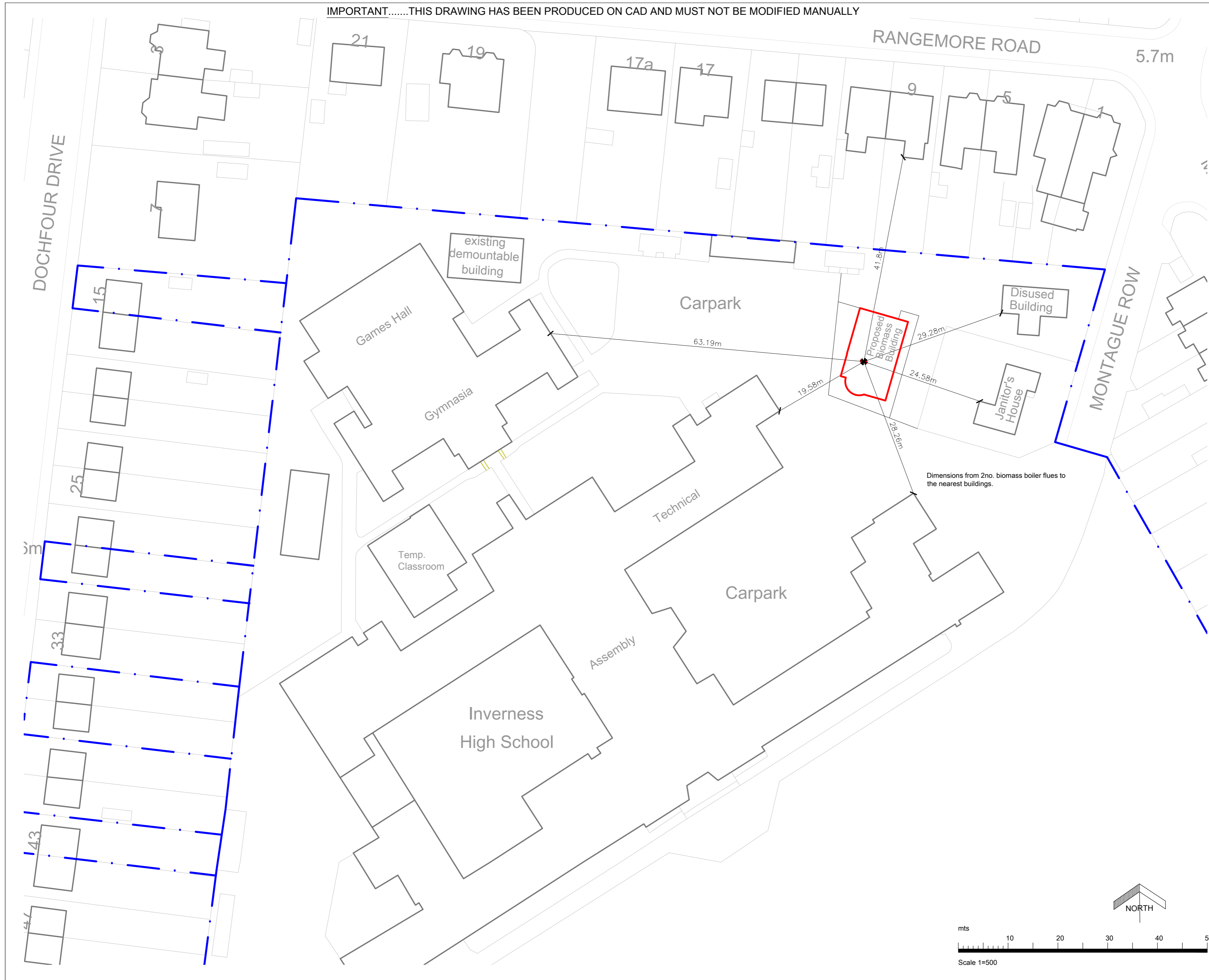
Description
Revised location and footprint of biomass building.



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CLIENT Care & Learning				
CONTACT				
PROJECT Inverness High School Proposed Biomass Building				
DRAWING TITLE Location Plan				
PURPOSE OF ISSUE Planning				
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DRAWING NUMBER CAL15098	PROJECT NUMBER A	AGENT (00)	SERIES 050	REV A

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Rev.	Purpose of issue.	By	Checked	Date
C	Planning	SB	AM	08/02/18

Description
Planning Issue.

Rev.	Purpose of issue.	By	Checked	Date
B	Preliminary	SB	SJ	29/08/17

Description
Revised location and footprint of biomass building

Rev.	Purpose of issue.	By	Checked	Date
A	Planning	DM	IMcD	17/03/17

Description
Dimensions from Biomass Boiler Flues to nearest buildings



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PROJECT
Inverness High School
Proposed Biomass Building

DRAWING TITLE
Block Plan

PURPOSE OF ISSUE
Planning

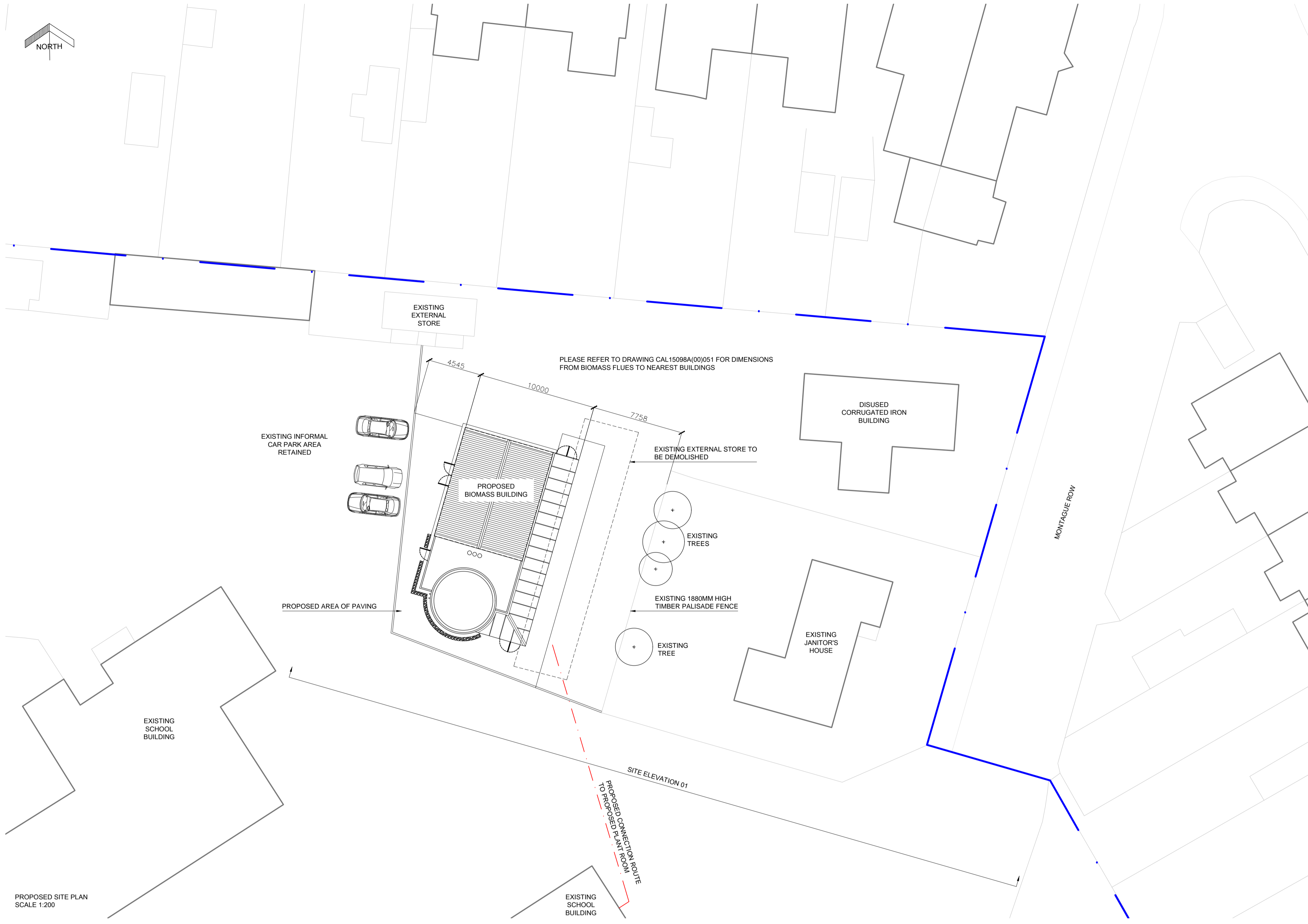
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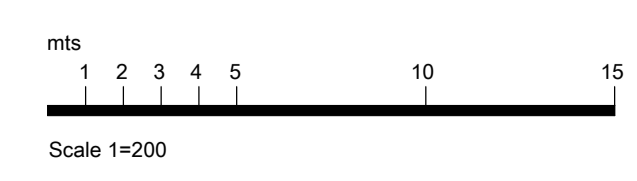
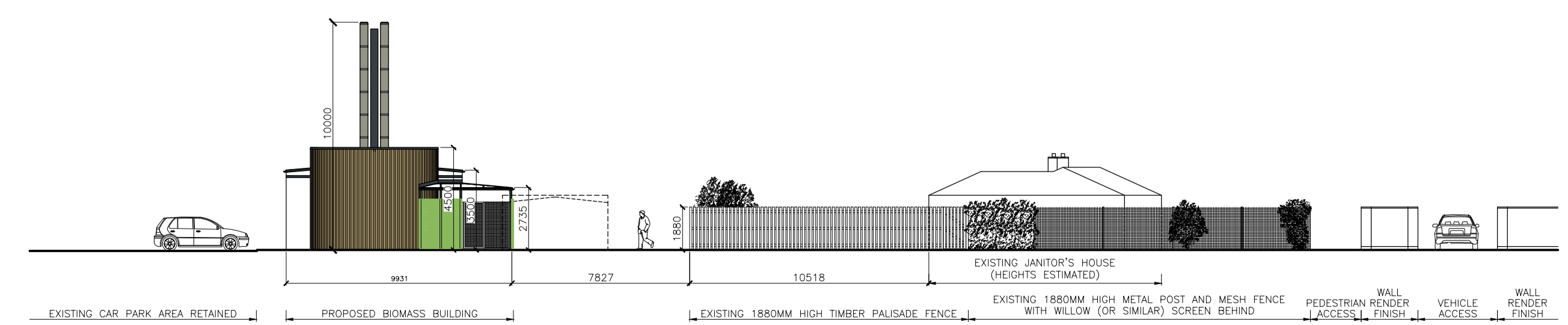
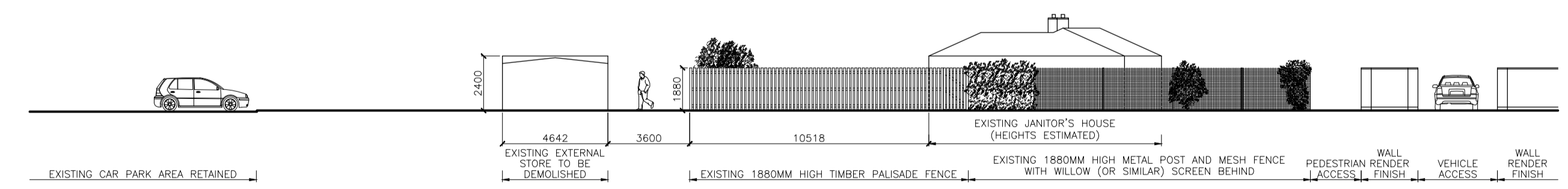


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PROPOSED SITE PLAN SCALE 1:200



Rev.	Purpose of issue.	By	Checked	Date
C	PLANNING	SB	AM	08.02.18
Description Planning issue.				
B	PRELIMINARY	SB	AM	06.02.18
Description Education corridor extended.				
A	PRELIMINARY	SB	SJ	05.09.17
Description Proposed connection route to proposed plant room added.				



The Highland Council
Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd

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PROJECT
Inverness High School Proposed Biomass Building

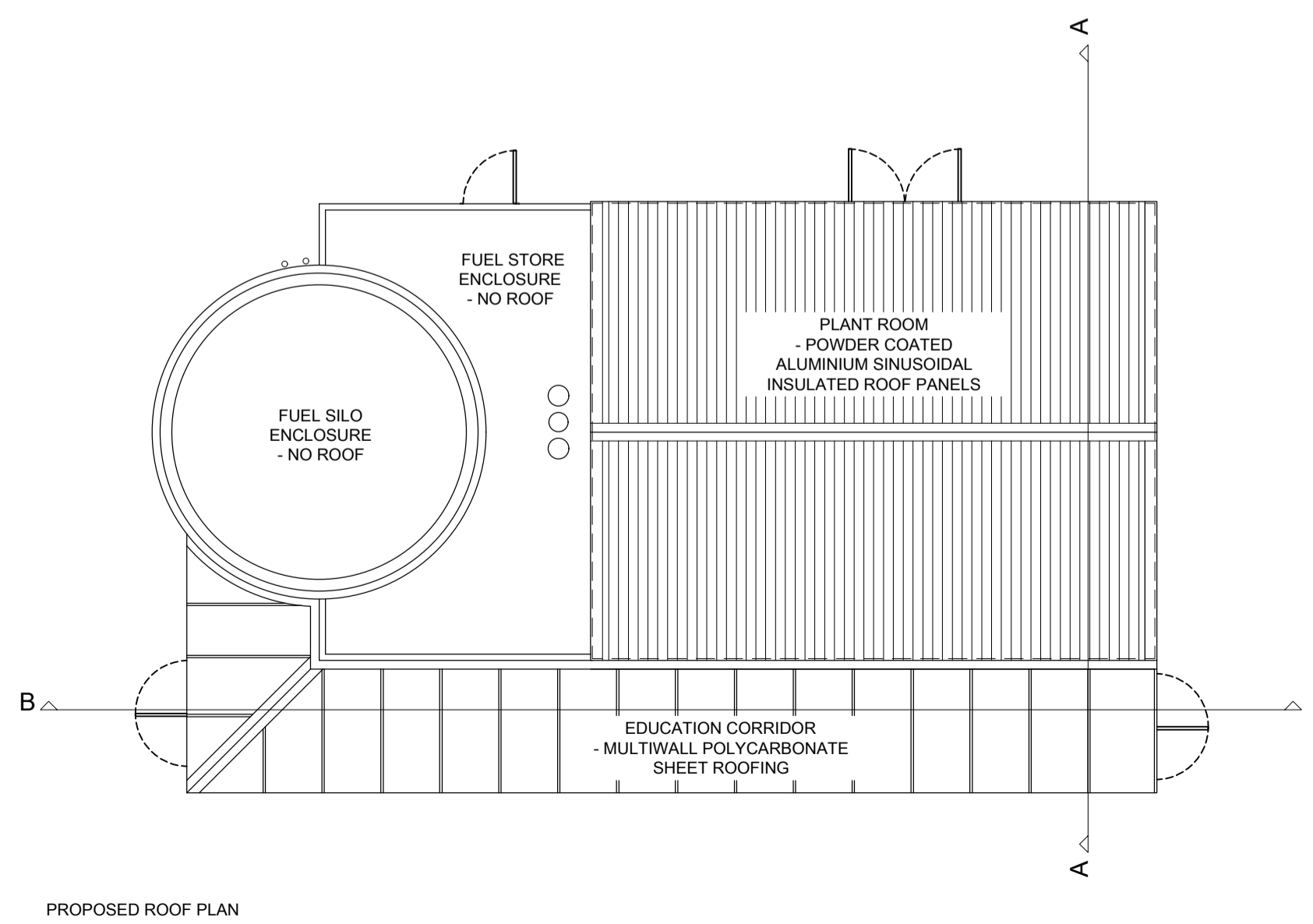
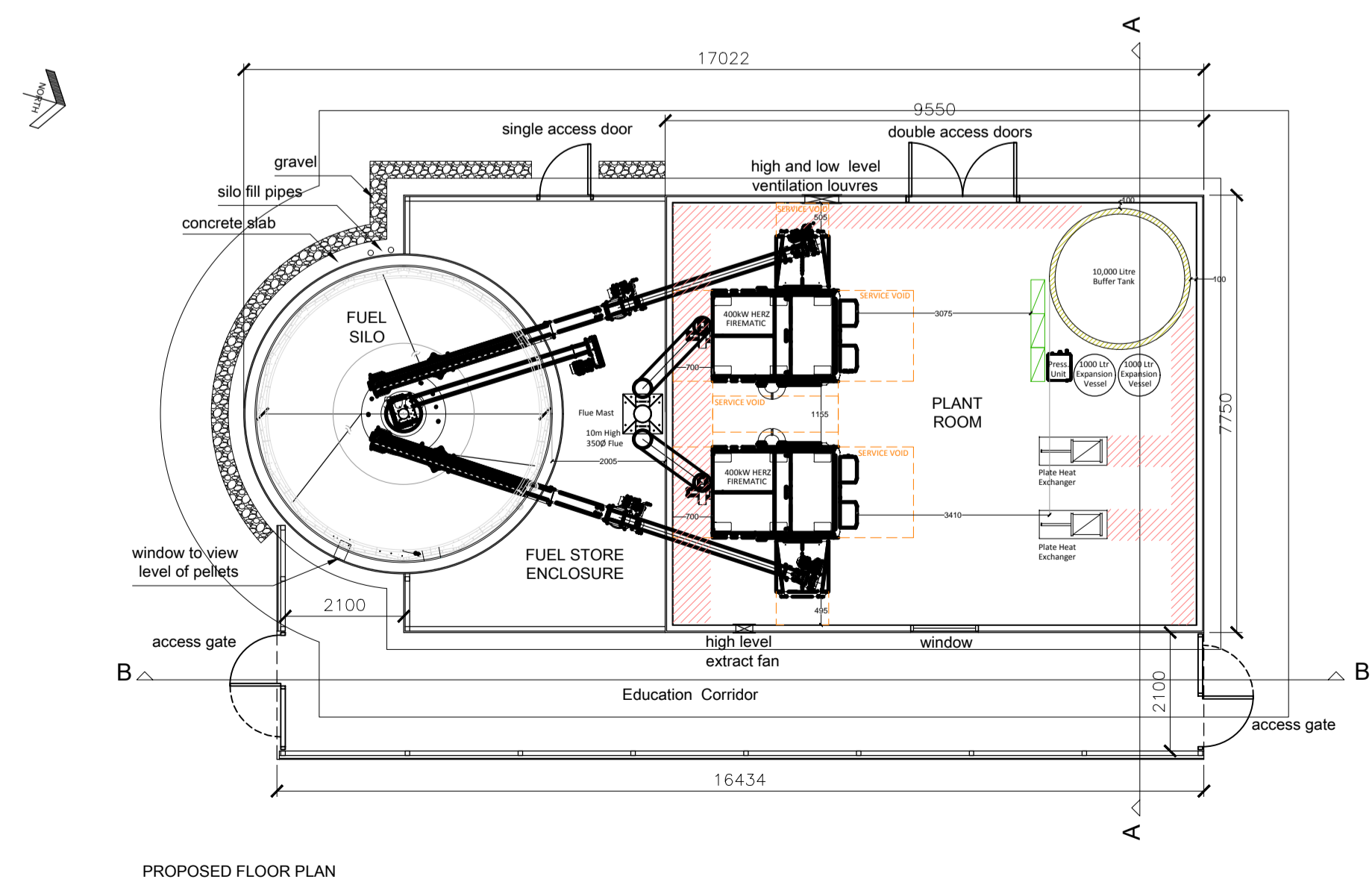
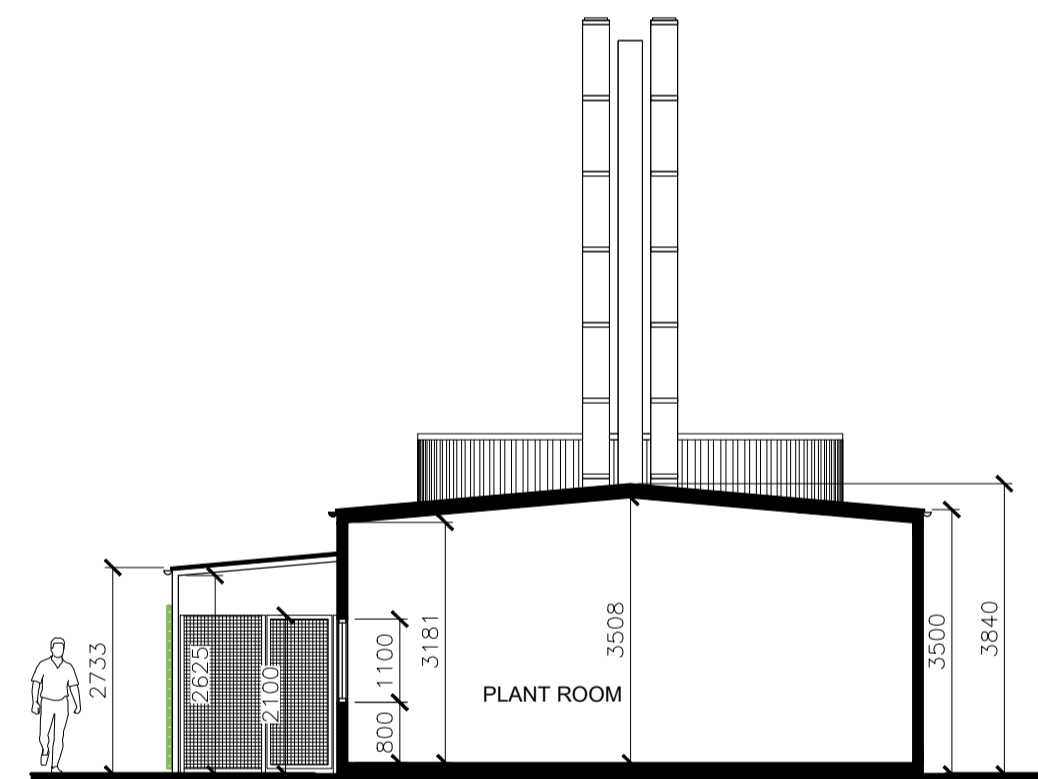
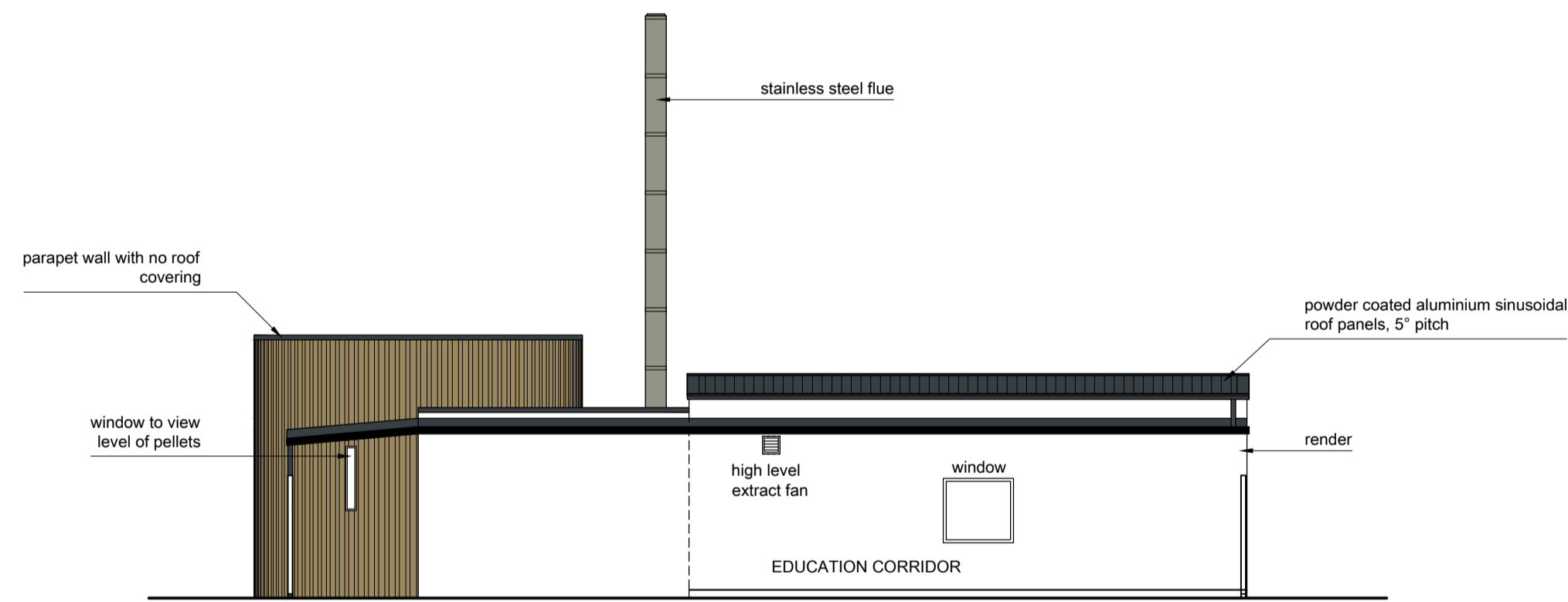
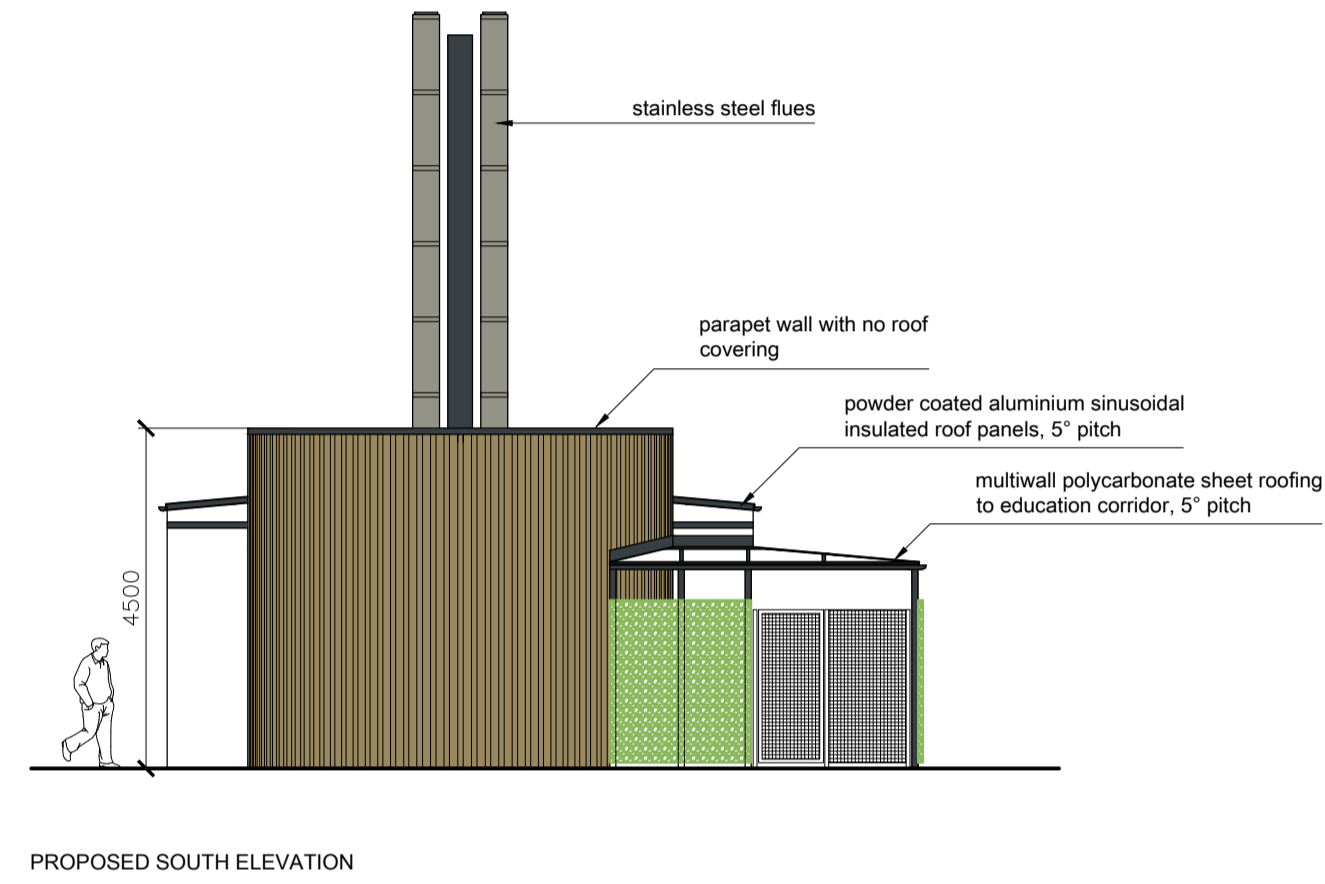
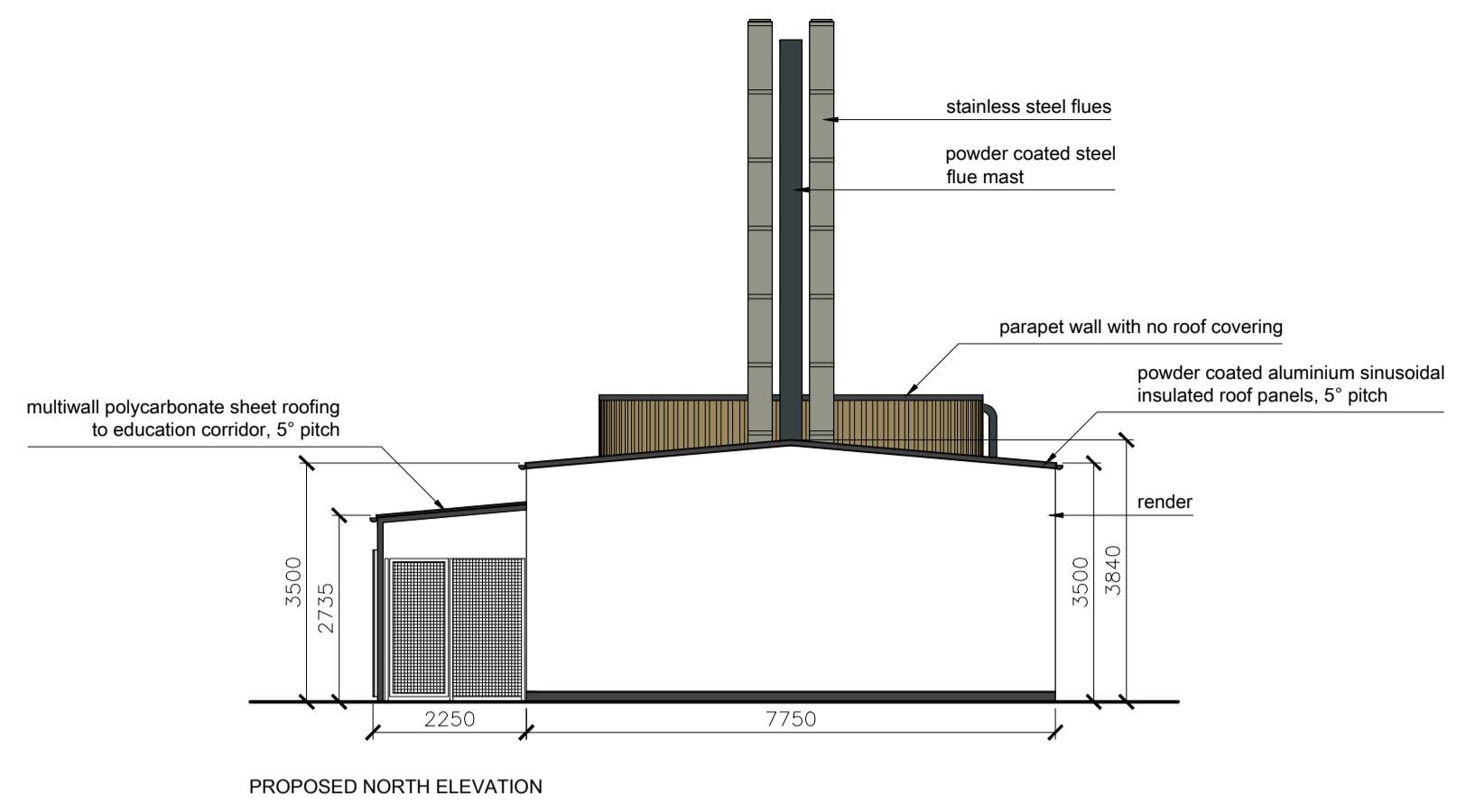
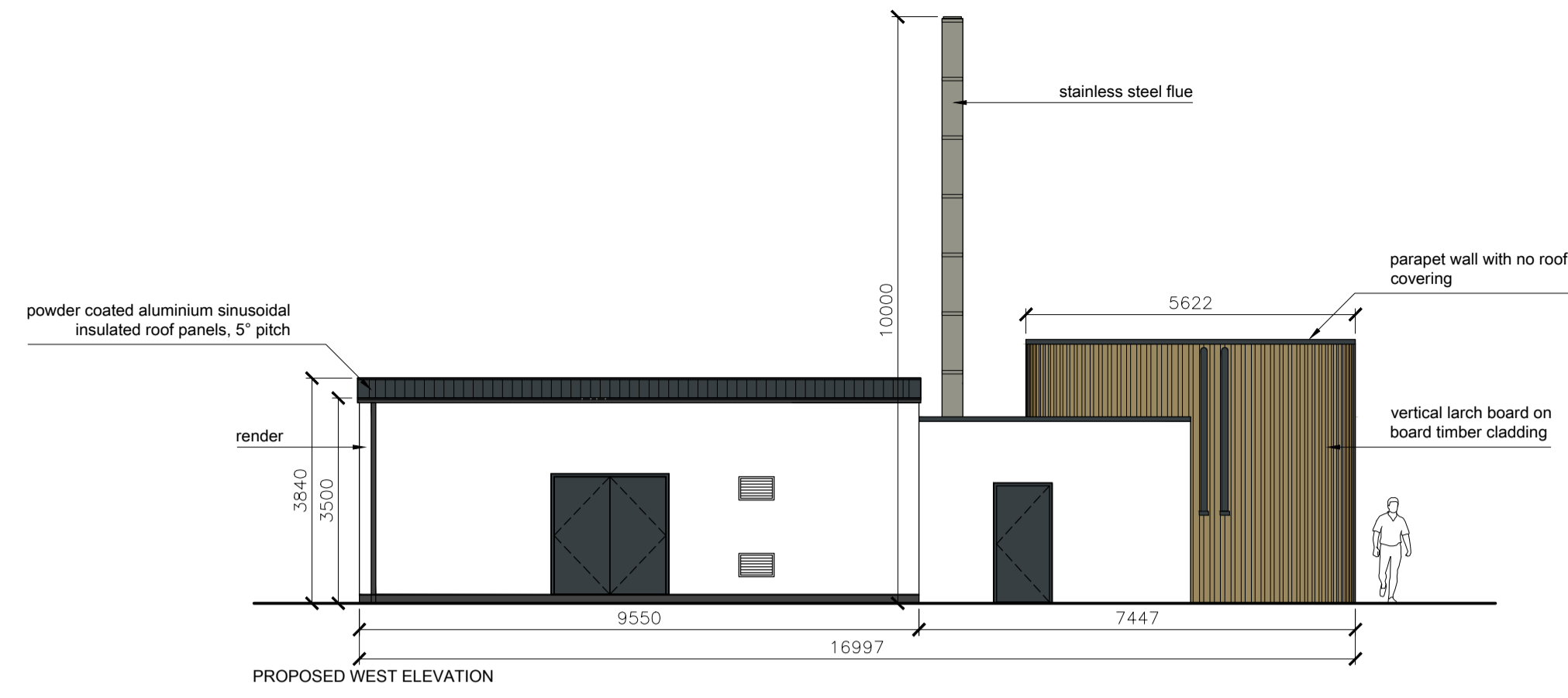
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Proposed Site Plan

PURPOSE OF ISSUE
Planning

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Rev.	Purpose of issue.	By	Checked	Date
B	Planning	SB	AM	06.02.2018
Description Plant layout updated. Planning Issue.				
A	Preliminary	SB	AM	06.02.2018
Description Changes to proposed education corridor.				



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PROJECT
Inverness High School Proposed Biomass Building

DRAWING TITLE
Proposed Biomass Building
 PURPOSE OF ISSUE
Planning

SCALE	DATE	DRAWN BY	CHECKED BY	ORIGINAL PAPER SIZE
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