THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Agenda Item	2.4
Report No	5-07

CAITHNESS, SUTHERLAND & EASTER ROSS PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE – 19 JUNE 2007

07/00098/FULSU - Change of use to form a cafe and shop, the erection of an extension to the rear of the building and the conversion of the first floor to form a flat at Gordon House, High Street, Dornoch

Report by Area Planning and Building Standards Manager

SUMMARY

The proposal is to change the use of the building from a former funeral parlour to form a cafe and shop, extension to rear and conversion of first floor to form flat. The application is being reported to Committee due to the design and massing of the proposed extension not being considered to be appropriate.

Ward Number 5 – East Sutherland and Edderton

The recommendation is to refuse.

1. PROPOSAL

1.1 Gordon House is opposite Dornoch Cathedral and is within the Conservation Area. It abuts 'Knockbreck' to the east and is immediately adjacent to a lane to the west, which allows pedestrian access to the rear of Gilchrist Square. 'Fernlea' stands on the opposite side of the lane. There is an area of ground to the rear of Gordon House measuring approximately 9.5m x 10m, much of which is currently occupied by a large timber shed. There is further open space beyond this, which forms part of the garden ground of 'Knockbreck'. The rear gardens of the houses on Gilchrist Square lie to the north and west of the site, on the opposite side of the lane. Both 'Knockbreck' and 'Fernlea' are two-storey buildings, significantly taller than Gordon House, which is a significant feature of the streetscape.

1.2 Gordon House is a modest single-storey structure of natural stone and slate construction, with two pitched roofs and a valley gutter between. The principal elevation facing onto High Street features two large shop windows on either side of a central timber double door. A small window on the gable wall of the rear part of the building looks out onto the lane to the west.

1.3 The main works to the building comprise:

- two first floor dormers to the main elevation to High Street
- raising the ridge of the main elevation roof to High Street
- two storey extension to the rear garden to provide kitchen and toilets on the ground floor and two bedroom flat to first floor

2. PLANNING HISTORY

2.1 06/00106/FULSU - Change of use of commercial premises to residential domestic dwelling – Approved 2 June 2006.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

3.1 No letters of representation have been received.

4. CONSULTATIONS

4.1 **Dornoch Community Council** – No objections. The Community Council is pleased that these premises are being upgraded and renovated and that a cafe will be included.

4.2 **Internal Consultees**

- **Contaminated Land** – No comment.
- **Environmental Health –** Concern over adequate provision for the storage and uplfift of refuse bins.

4.3 **External Consultees**

- **Conservation Architect -** Although not listed, the property is of traditional form, construction and appearance and occupies a very prominent site within the Conservation Area opposite the Cathedral. Whereas I would welcome the property being brought into use and would support its use for a shop and cafe, I have concerns about the alterations which would be required to the traditional form of the existing building in order to provide accommodation for the attic level flat. I would suggest that the proposals are not practical. Raising the ridge of the front pitch will have an effect on the rear pitch of the roof and its junction with the gable to the lane. The fact that the proposed configuration has to resort to an area of flat roof reflects the measures that need to be taken in order to address the increase in accommodation. The existing property is relatively modest in footprint and built form and I have concerns that the proposals attempt to squeeze too much accommodation onto the site.
- **Archaeology** – A photographic record is required (ARC 3 condition).

5. POLICY

5.1 The following policies are relevant to the assessment of the proposal

Highland Structure Plan:

- G2 Design for Sustainability
- BC5 Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas

South and East Local Plan:

- ENV2 favours development unless this would affect important local features
- S1 Town/Village Centre gives favourable consideration to town centre uses

5.2 The proposal also requires to be assessed against the following relevant Scottish Planning Policies (SPP); NPPG, and Planning Advice Notes (PAN).

- SPP8: Town Centres and Retailing
- PAN 68 Design Statements

6. PLANNING APPRAISAL

6.1 **Determining issues** – 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.

6.2 The proposal requires to be assessed against both the appropriate policies of the Development Plan, supplementary guidance and National Planning Policy and Guidelines as referred to in the Policy section. In particular, the proposal requires detailed assessment of the following fundamental issues:

- whether the principle of development is appropriate in terms of policy
- the impact on the amenity of the area and residents

6.3 The applicant has indicated that the proposed development would be run as a café and shop with an upstairs flat. The applicant is of the view that the existing building needs to be extended with a new kitchen and toilets, and that the present size would not allow enough tables to make a viable café. The agent has submitted a design statement with the application, advising that the proposed visible roofs will be finished in natural slate. The applicant has submitted a further statement and copies of both are attached to the rear of the report.

6.4 **The application is being reported to Committee** as the overall scale and massing of the proposed extension and alterations to the existing building is not considered to be appropriate.

6.5 The first floor of the existing building is an attic space and does not provide sufficient headroom for living accommodation in its current form. Therefore, it is proposed to increase the ridge height of the roof to the front of the building by 0.25m, while simultaneously setting it back from the centreline of the chimney. This will allow the existing roof pitch to be maintained. Two dormer windows would be added to the front plane of the roof and a small vertical upstand hung with slates would be formed to the rear of the roof below the ridge. This would allow the rear

plane of the roof to remain unaltered, but to meet with the new ridgeline. A large extension measuring 5.5m x 7.5m x 6.5m would be added to the rear of the building to accommodate a kitchen and toilets for the cafe. This would be narrower than the existing building, but 0.25m taller, in order to match the new ridge height to the front. Its roof would be perpendicular to those existing and would run from the ridge at the front straight through to the rear. In conjunction with a hidden flat-roofed section, this would allow sufficient headroom for the proposed first floor flat.

6.6 The developer wishes to provide a considerable increase in the floorspace of the building. This requires very significant alterations to this modest sized building with the provision of both a large rear extension and raising the existing roofline to provide a first floor. The raising of the ridge of the front pitch will have an effect on the rear pitch of the roof and its junction with the gable to the lane. The fact that the proposed configuration has to resort to an area of flat roof reflects the measures that need to be taken in order to address the increase in accommodation. In my opinion the proposal attempts to squeeze too much accommodation onto the site.

6.7 It is my view that the principle of extending the existing building is acceptable. However, I do not consider that the proposal in its current form is appropriate as it does not demonstrate sensitive siting in keeping with local character and historic environment as required by Structure Plan Policy G2. The proposal is also judged to have a significantly detrimental impact on individual and community residential amenity by nature of its scale and therefore does not accord with Policy G2 in this respect either.

6.8 Furthermore, I am of the view that the proposal does not preserve the historic or architectural interest of the building as required by Structure Plan Policy BC5.

6.9 SPP8 notes that the design of all proposals should take account of the local environment. Designs which fail to integrate development with its surroundings, because of scale, should be refused planning permission.

7. CONCLUSION

7.1 I do not consider that the proposal accords with Development Plan Policy and refusal is recommended.

RECOMMENDATION

Refuse planning permission for the following reasons:

1. The proposal does not demonstrate sensitive siting in keeping with local character and historic environment as required by Highland Structure Plan Policy G2 Design for Sustainability.

2. The proposal is judged to have a significantly detrimental impact on individual and community residential amenity by nature of its scale and therefore does not accord with Highland Structure Plan Policy G2 Design for Sustainability.

3. The proposal does not preserve the historic or architectural interest of the building as required by Highland Structure Plan Policy BC5 Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas.

4. Approval of the proposal would set a dangerous precedent, making it difficult to refuse applications of a similar nature in the future.

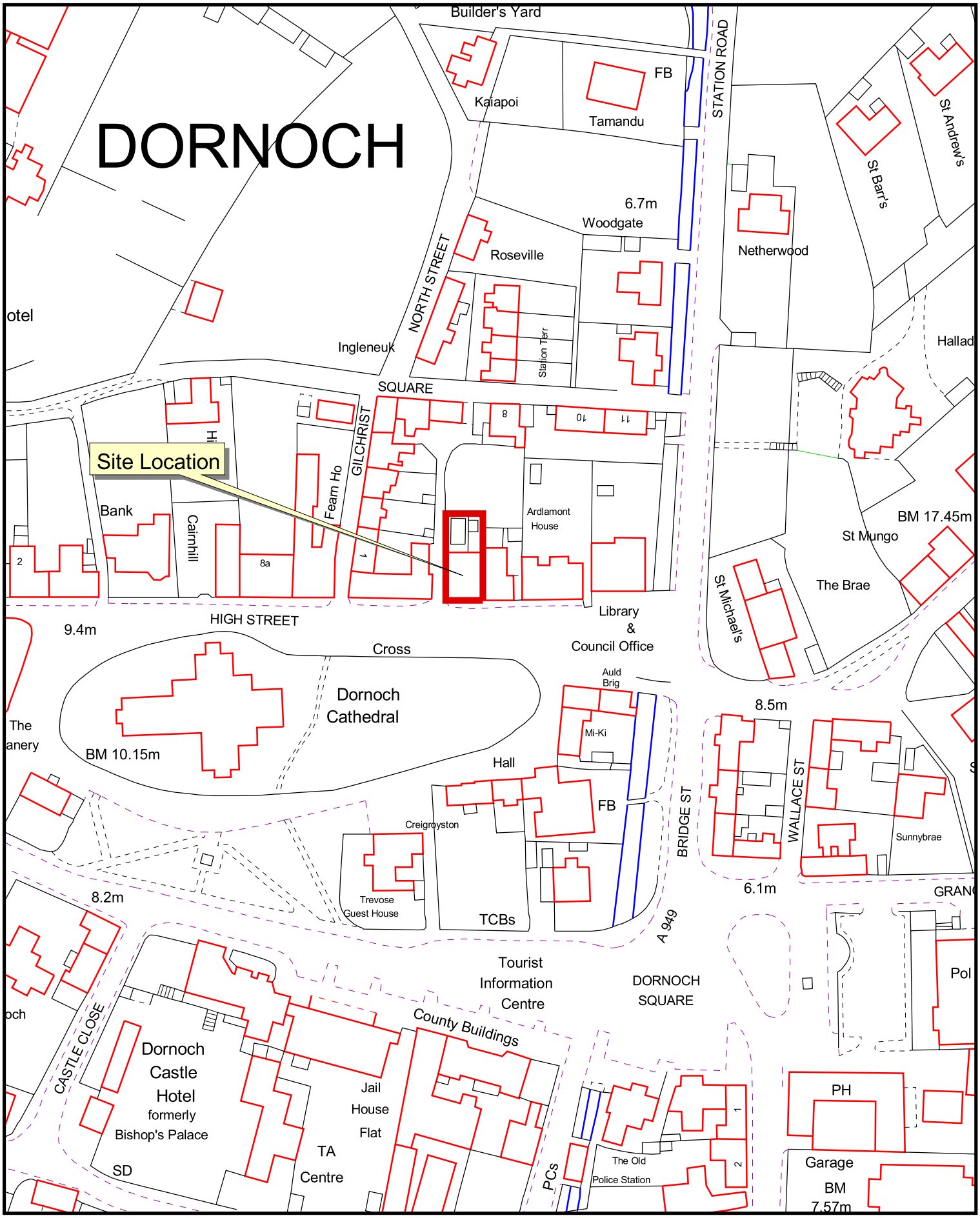
Signature:

Designation: Area Planning & Building Standards Manager

Author: Bob Robertson – Principal Planner 01862 812044

Background Papers: As referred to in the report above and case file reference number 07/00098/FULSU

Date: 12 June 2007



The Highland Council
Comhairle na Gaidhealtachd
SERVING The Highland Community

07/00098/FULSU
Change of use to form cafe and shop. Extension to rear and conversion of first floor to form flat at Gordon House, High Street, Dornoch.

Mr & Mrs J Ross
per Blueprint Architecture
123 Obsdale Park
Alness.

N

Scale
1:1250

Date: 12 June 2007

SUPPLIED BY THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

HIGHFIELD HOUSE
DELNY
INVERGORDON
ROSS-SHIRE
IV18 0NW

Tel : 01862 842662

GORDON HOUSE, HIGH STREET, DORNOCH

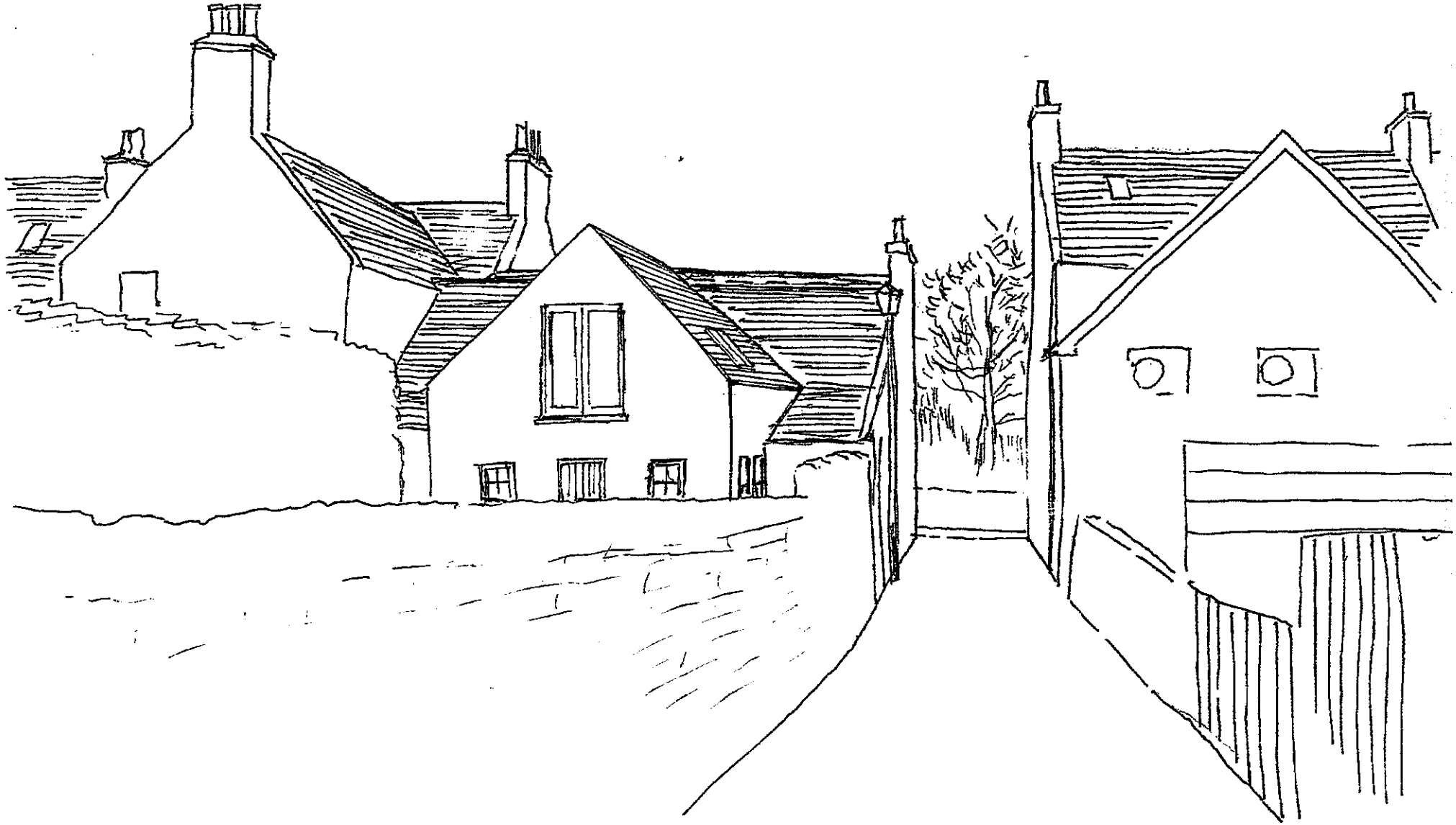
With reference to my planning application for the conversion of the above property to a coffee and gift shop, and flat above, I would like to bring to your attention the following points:

1. **The extension at the rear is to allow for a kitchen and customer toilets as the present size of the building would not enable me to furnish the coffee shop with adequate tables and chairs to make the business viable.**
2. **The flat above the property would be for my daughter to live as she would be managing both businesses, and escalating costs of property in the area make it impossible for her to purchase a flat.**
3. **We would hope to employ 3 full time and possibly 4 part time staff, and would hope the business would attract new customers which in turn would also help the other shopkeepers.**
4. **We have had no objections from neighbours, and the property, currently derelict, would benefit from upgrading. See attachment 1**
5. **The property on the left is fully extended to the boundary and is 2 stories high, and the property to the right has a flat roof extension extending further than we are proposing. See attachment 2**
6. **On the drawings, we propose to incorporate slated pitched roofs all round- to keep in character with the building , see Design Statement from Architect**

Gordon House, High Street, DORNOCH

End terraced stone property in the centre of Dornoch requiring complete renovation. Planning Permission has been granted for change of use. Small garden to the rear. Front hall, front office, large office, main room, rear hall, store room.

Viewing: Through Selling Solicitors



DESIGN STATEMENT

Project: Change of Use & Extension of
Gordon House, High Street, Dornoch
To provide new Café/Shop on Ground Floor
And new Manager's Flat on First Floor

Client: Mr & Mrs J Ross

Date: 3rd March 2007

SITE ANALYSIS
Gordon House is situated on Dornoch High Street and lies between two taller stone built houses. It is within the Conservation Area. A narrow access lane runs along the West boundary of the property and this serves the rear gardens of Gilchrist Square. Land to the rear of Gordon House has an area of approximately 110sq/m and at present a timber shed occupies part of the site.
The building is now in need of repair and has lain vacant for a number of years. Most recently it was occupied and owned by a local undertaker.
The interior of the building has witnessed significant structural changes to accommodate a large open plan area with smaller supplementary spaces on a lower level at the rear. The building has an approximate internal floor area of 95sq/m.
Externally the building retains slate roofs and exposed sandstone walls. The walls on the West gable in particular are now in need of repair having been exposed to the elements due to lack of repair to the harl render. A stone wall also runs along the West boundary of the site to the rear and it is intended that this be reinstated when works have been completed. For clarity this wall is not shown on the Planning Application drawing (072/PL100).

ACCESS
Access to the building is from the High Street. There is a secondary access at a lower level from the rear garden area.

DETAIL OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT
The proposed development seeks to give Gordon House a sustainable new use. My clients wish to open a Café and Shop to be run by their daughter and they have selected this property because of its location on the High Street and proximity to existing shops and car parking.
The existing floor area of the building restricts potential development and this may be why the building has been unoccupied for so long. It is therefore proposed to construct an extension to the rear of the property to provide new kitchen and toilet accommodation. These facilities cannot feasibly be accommodated within the existing floor area. The extension will have a floor area of 41sq/m and will occupy 37% of the available site area to the rear of the property.
Due to the limited amount of accommodation available in Dornoch and the high rental values, my clients wish to provide new living accommodation above the Café and Shop for their daughter who will manage the new business. This accommodation is accessed from the shop and does not have a separate door and therefore cannot be sub-let.

blueprint architecture
123 OBSDALE PARK | ALNESS | IV17 0TR
0771 25 30 915 | BLUEPRINT@ECOSSE.NET

DESIGN STATEMENT (cont).

The design of the new extension takes into account the height of the existing wall head and ridge. It is intended to compliment and fit in with its surrounding. Therefore, all visible roofs will be finished in natural slate and the new ridge running perpendicular to High Street has been positioned so that the new section of roof will not be visible from the front of the building. To the rear a new gable relates to those at the rear of both neighbouring properties, although it will be significantly lower.

To achieve a practical ceiling height within the new 1st floor Flat it is proposed that the front ridge be raised by 250mm. Please see drawing 072/PL100. This will not affect how Gordon House reads as part of the streetscape of the High Street. Careful consideration has been given to this and changes to the front of the building have been kept to an absolute minimum.
Two new dormer windows of a traditional style and proportion are proposed for the front of the building. These will be the only noticeable changes to the front apart from new rainwater goods and replacement timber windows. The existing signage on either side of the main access door is to be retained.
New render is proposed for the extension and the existing gable and sample panels will be prepared for approval prior to this work being carried out.

CONCLUSION
The proposed works will provide a new use for Gordon House and will help to improve the appearance of the building as part of Dornoch's busy High Street.
The scale of the development has been limited so as to not detract from the character of the surrounding area and material choice has also reflected this.
The proposed development seeks to make the building viable by providing a new business and new accommodation for the manager. Without development the building does not present a sustainable and viable use. The new accommodation is an essential requirement due to the difficulty and expense of finding accommodation elsewhere in Dornoch. Due to the height of the building and the amount of available land to the rear the building can easily accommodate the proposed new use, whilst still limiting any visual impact when viewed from the High Street.

Duncan MacDonald
Architect

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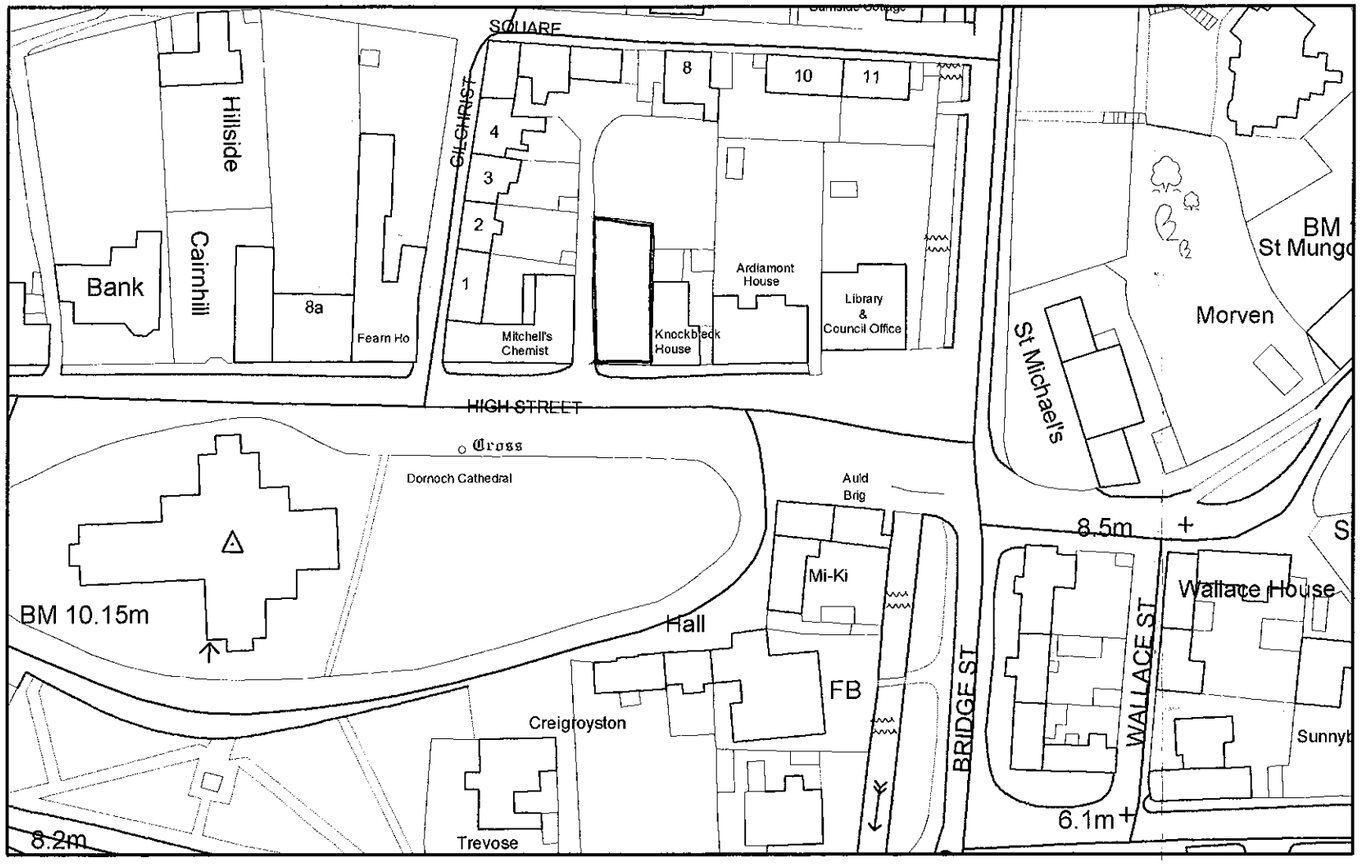
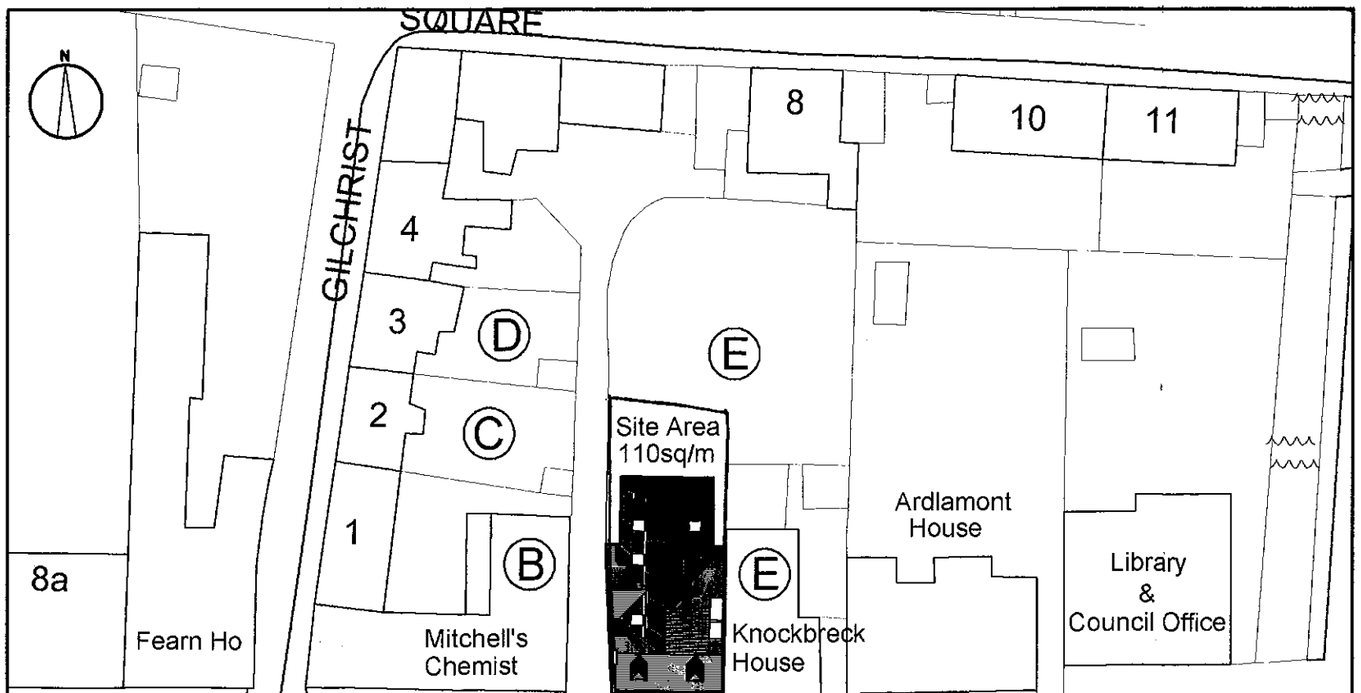
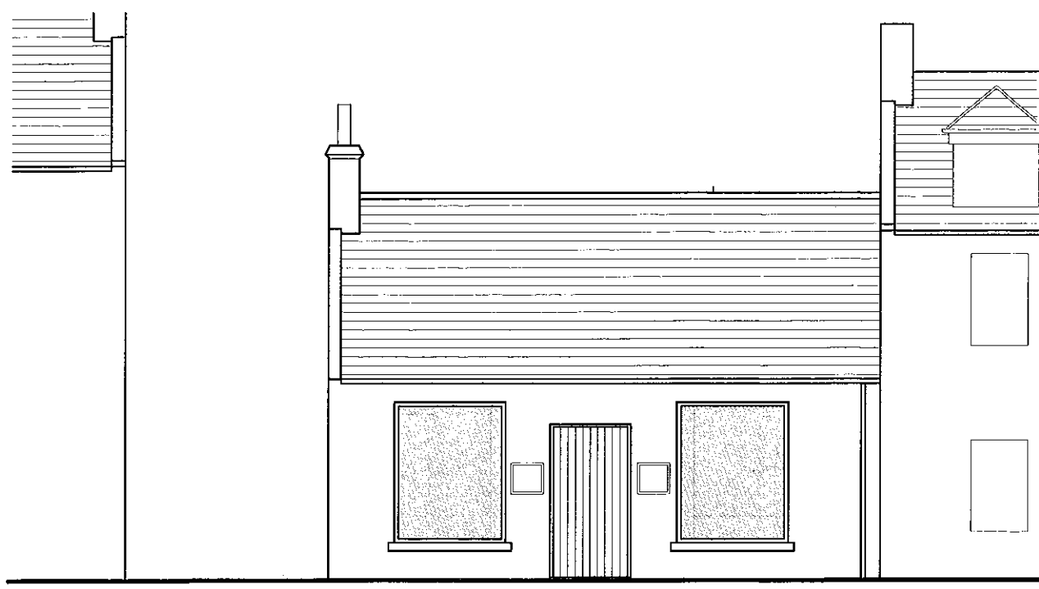


Site Plan (1:1000)



Proposed Front Elevation (from High Street)

scale 1:100



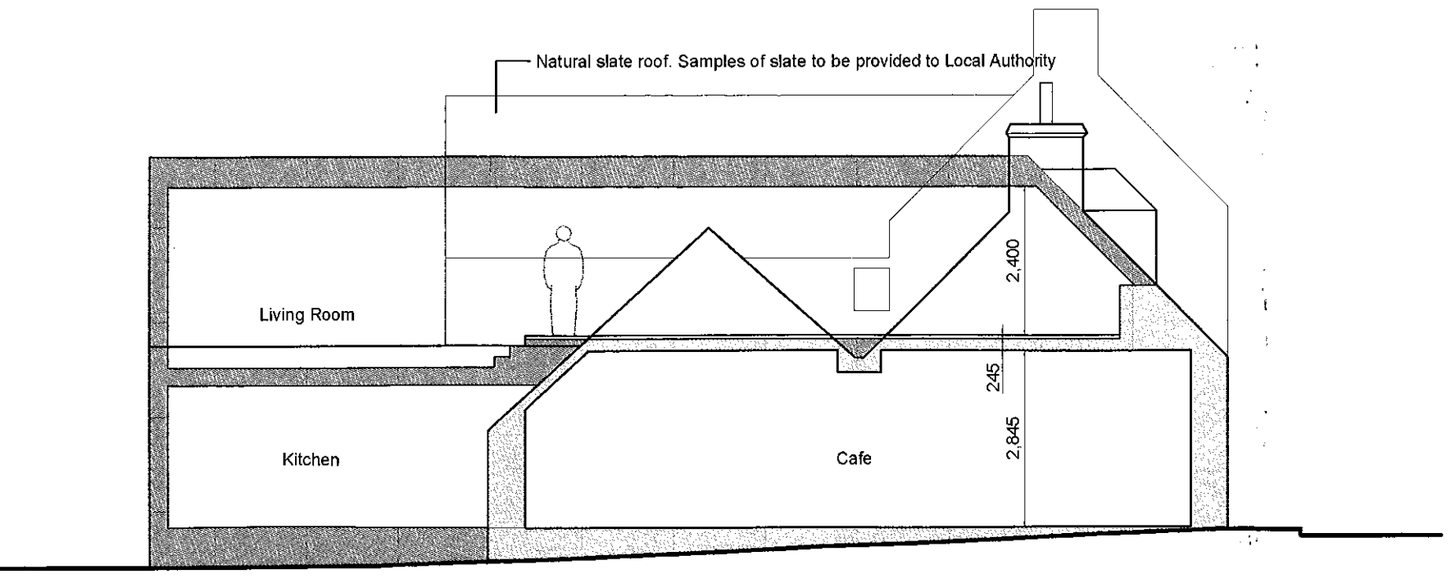
Existing Front Elevation (from High Street)

Side Elevation

scale 1:100

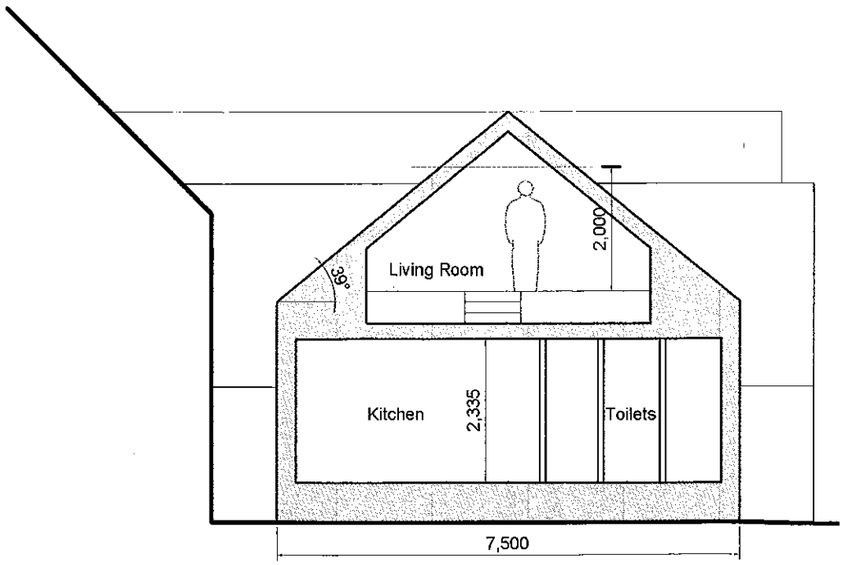
Rear Elevation

scale 1:100

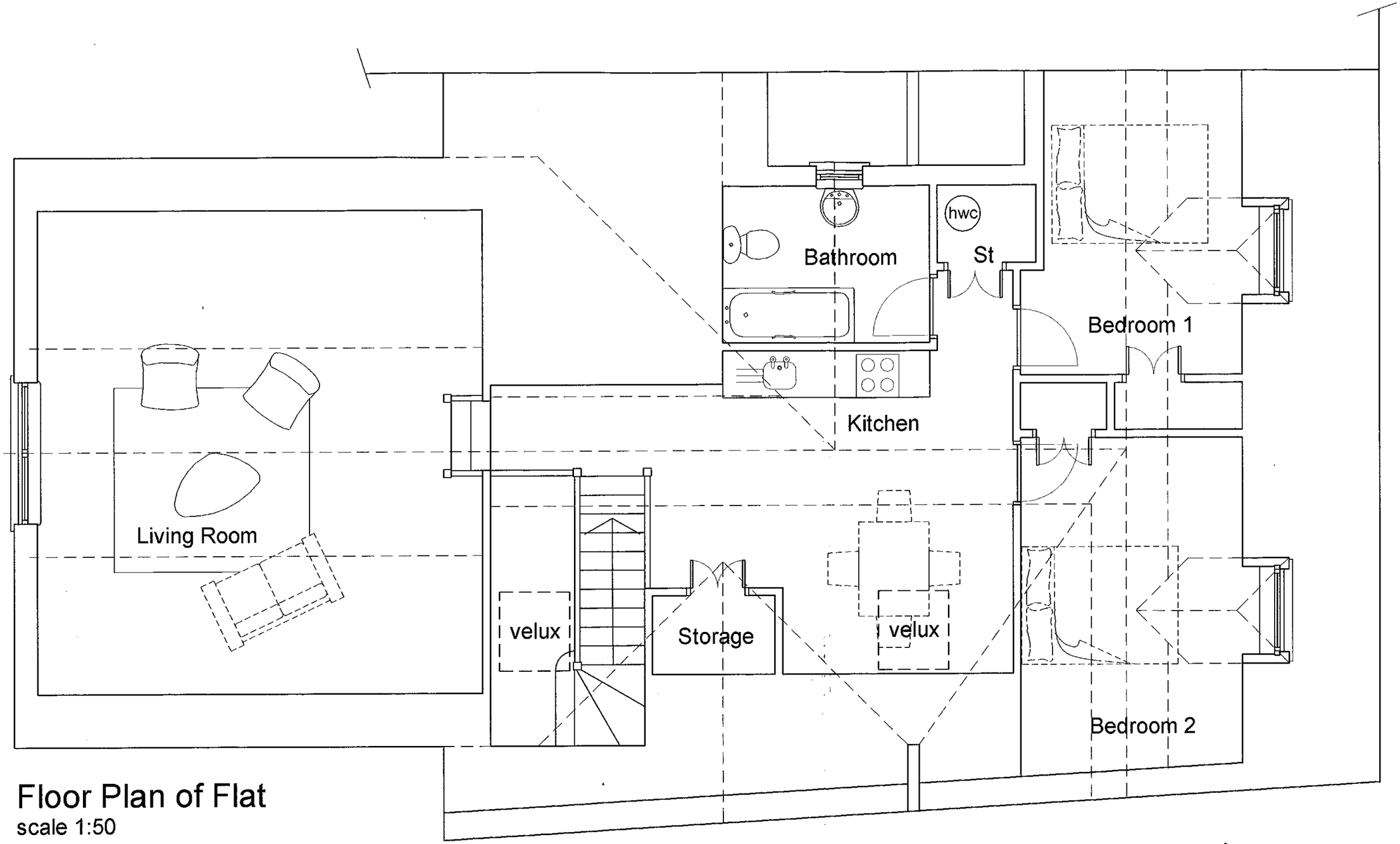


Section A.A.

scale 1:100



Section B.B.



Floor Plan of Flat

scale 1:50

blueprintarchitecture

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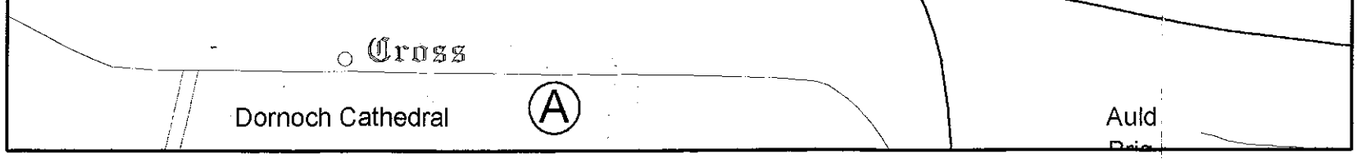
PLAN (...)

07/00098/FUL

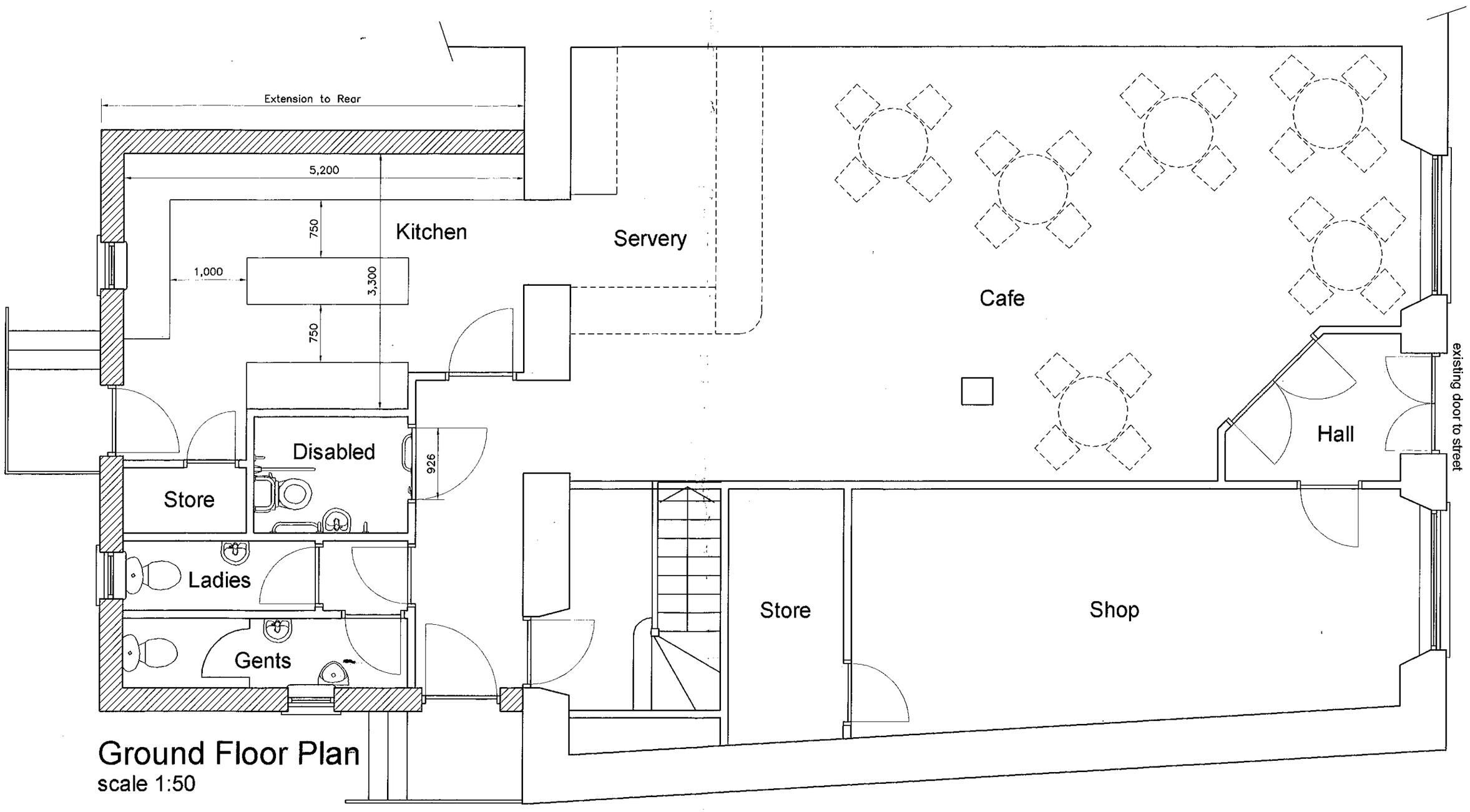
RECEIVED 05/03/07

Client	Mr & Mrs J Ross	Scale: Noted
Project	New Cafe & Flat, Gordon House, Dornoch IV25 3SH	
Title	Plans & Elevations for Planning Permission	
Drawing No.	072 / PL100	Rev

0 10 Millimetres 100

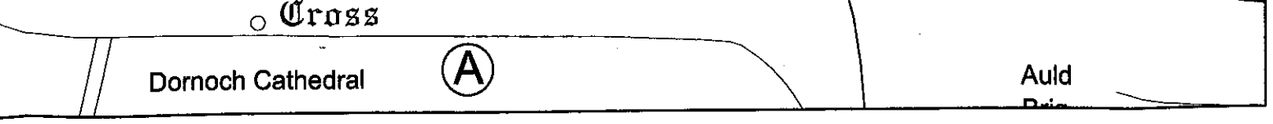


Site Plan (1:500)



Ground Floor Plan

scale 1:50



e Plan (1:500)

< Site extends 5.4m

Extension to Rear

Kitchen to be ventilated by Vent-Axia T-Series Ceiling extract 60litres/sec (intermittent) ducted to roof cowl.

5,200

750

1,000

3,300

750

926

Kitchen (17.5sq/m)

Servery

Paved Area to Rear

Cafe Area

Hall

Disabled

Store

Ladies

Gents

Bins

Staff Entrance

Store

Shop Area

New 1600mm wide gates to provide amenity access

Existing Stone Wall Reinstated

Ground Floor Plan

scale 1:50