

**THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL**

**NORTH PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE  
24 March 2015**

Agenda Item	6.6
Report No	PLN/015/15

**15/00257/FUL : North Highland College  
Burghfield House, Cnoc-An-Lobht, Dornoch**

**Report by Area Planning Manager**

**SUMMARY**

**Description :** Replacement of existing single glazed sash and case timber windows to Burghfield House, with double glazed sash and case timber windows.

**Recommendation - REFUSE**

**Ward :** 05 - East Sutherland and Edderton

**Development category :** Local Development

**Reason referred to Committee :** Recommended for delegated refusal and referred to Committee by Ward Members.

**1. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT**

1.1 The application is in detail for the replacement of the existing single glazed sash and case windows within Burghfield House. The existing windows are composed of fine astrigals/glazing bars with crown glass and this detailing adds to the character of the building. The fenestration is mixed throughout the building with a range of patterns eg 1 over 1, 2 over 2, 2 over 1.

The proposed new windows would be double glazed timber sash and case.

Planning permission is required for the replacement windows as the building lies within the Dornoch Conservation area and is used commercially.

1.2 Proposal has been subject to informal pre-application discussion around 18 months ago, with advice given at that time that the Planning Authority would not be able to support the removal of the windows and their replacement as then proposed.

A meeting to discuss other planning matters (replacement boundary wall) on 06.01.2015 was extended to cover the replacement of windows. Verbal advice at this meeting was that replacement windows would have to match like for like the existing windows; although repair and maintenance with secondary glazing solutions of the existing would be the first preference.

- 1.3 The application has been accompanied by
- Windows condition assessment (16.01.2015)
  - supporting statement (27.01.2015)

1.5 **Variations:** No variations have been made to the application since it was submitted.

## 2. **SITE DESCRIPTION**

2.1 The building lies within the Dornoch Conservation Area but is not listed, despite its age, size, prominent position above the central core of Dornoch and architectural interest.

The building is a significant Victorian-era property (c.1896), originally named 'Northfield', sitting in an elevated position; it has a square tower with circular turret, piercing the skyline from many parts of Dornoch.

The grounds of Burghfield House provide a degree of context and setting; there are a considerable number of mature trees, with large areas of open lawn and landscaping.

The site is currently used by North Highland College (part of the University of the Highlands and Islands) for providing both further and higher education facilities, offering golf management, hospitality and hotel management training together with a Centre for History along with a Training Hotel accommodation.

## 3. **PLANNING HISTORY**

- 3.1
- 07/00387/FULSU Change of use from hotel to hotel with training and further education facilities. Approved 31.10.2007
  - 08/00177/FULSU Alterations, upgrading and extension of existing building. Approved 25.07.2008
  - 14/04676/FUL Downtaking and rebuilding of boundary wall. Formation of an opening to allow for new pathway and steps. Approved 03.03.2015

## 4. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

4.1 Advertised : Development in Conservation Area. Expiry 27.02.2015

Representation deadline : 27.02.2015

Timeous representations : 0

Late representations : 0

4.2 Material considerations raised are summarised as follows:

- None

## 5. **CONSULTATIONS**

5.1 **Conservation Officer** (02.0:2.2015) - This application is not supported by national or local policy. The windows in that building are traditional, historic windows which are of value in a historic building in the conservation area. They are in relatively good condition and are capable of repair. As such replacement is not supported by historic environment policies and I am not prepared to support this proposal. Additionally the application should be considered against sustainability policies.

The proposal is to remove perfectly good timber windows for no reason. Where thermal performance is an issue this can be improved by upgrading and draft stripping of the existing windows and possibly, if necessary, secondary glazing options.

## **6. DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

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 and Cultural Heritage |

### **6.2 Sutherland Local Plan – no specific policies for the application site**

## **7. OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

### **7.1 Highland Council Supplementary Planning Policy Guidance**

Sustainable Design Guide Supplementary Guidance (January 2013)

### **7.2 Scottish Government Planning Policy and Guidance**

Scottish Historic Environment Policy (December 2011)

## **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.**

Furthermore, under s64 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997, the Planning Authority has a duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of the area.

The **supporting statement submitted by the agent** outlines that:

*There are various reasons that make the replacement of single glazed window at Burghfield House a necessity now and become one of the critical items for upgrade*

- With hotel accommodation the requirement to meet occupant comfort aspirations is necessary.*
- Providing facilities for students, staff and visitors of a recognised and required standard is essential.*
- Building Standard legislation in terms of Section 6.*
- Health and Safety in operation and maintenance.*

*In Burghfield House use, the guests within the hotel together with College staff and compounded by the levels of revenue costs associated with heating have led the College to propose that the replacement windows are double glazed to improve the thermal performance of the building as a whole whilst providing improved comfort for guests within the hotel.*

*The College now has now secured sufficient funds to carry out the works that were originally planned to be under take on the windows at Burghfield House when the College originally acquired the property.*

*With Burghfield House being located within the Conservation Area and its historical heritage are proposing to replace the windows with a hardwood painted window frames to match the existing and replicates the glazing astragal patterns but at the same time rationalises the pattern. Over many years of refurbishment replacement windows have meant that there is not consistency of astragal pattern and resulted in an inconsistent approach.*

*We would propose continuity appropriate for this type of building within the Conservation Area. From appended drawings to this application we have indicated the proposed elevation and existing elevation for windows. This has been done to demonstrate the maintaining of sight lines to the proposed windows being closely consistent to the existing windows.*

*The College do not intend to undertake this work on the areas of glazing that have stained glass as this is a specialised piece of work that will be dealt with separately.*

*The College are proposing two different solutions to the Council both based on painted wooden windows and details of these are in the accompanying architect's specifications. The College are keen to work with the Council to agree an affordable and appropriate solution to the challenge they have on the objectives of improving the overall thermal performance of the building whilst retaining the Edwardian style of the building.*

The **window condition assessment** is a generic document and does not provide an overall complete assessment of all the windows in each room of the building which are proposed to be replaced; it provides general comment about a select number of rooms.

**Letter of support from North Highland College** (25.02.2015) – in which they advise that the availability of grant funding for the project is restricted to this financial year. The college wish to install double glazed units to allow for improved thermal performance. They consider the proposal to install timber sliding sash and case windows on a like for like basis to be sympathetic to the original character of the building.

Furthermore, **discussions have taken place with the agent regarding the installation of secondary glazing** either by slimline secondary glazing within the existing window frames, or by secondary glazing units behind the existing window frames. In addition there has been an exploration of the repair and maintenance regime of the existing windows. However, it is understood that the proposed works – the removal of the existing timber windows and replacement with new windows – are the only ones eligible for funding.

- 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 Material Considerations

The Planning Authority has indicated to the agent and previously to the applicants that wholesale replacement of all the windows in the building as outlined in the application would be unlikely to be supported unless a compelling and detailed rationale for such was set out. The removal and replacement of the existing windows on this significant building in the Conservation Area would result in the loss of a substantial element of the character of the building and a significant loss to the conservation area.

The existing windows do require general maintenance to be carried out – sanding down, painting - as do all timber windows on a regular cycle of care and maintenance. However this is not a justification for the removal of the existing windows and their replacement with modern windows, the lifespan of which has been suggested at around 20 years.

There may be a case for the removal of parts of windows, with the splicing out of rotten timber. This in itself could be undertaken on a maintenance basis and would not require planning permission. However, an initial examination of the windows suggests that most of the windows are in a generally good state of physical repair.

The applicant has indicated that the windows are draughty, although it is unclear whether this is a single window, a number of windows, or all windows. It has been suggested to the applicant that the use of slimline secondary glazing (fitting specialist glazing behind the existing glass within the existing unit), or the installation of secondary glazing units (which would be fitted behind the existing glazing), would, along with draught proofing/refurbishment/new balances, be a means to improve the existing windows giving a similar result to the proposed replacement of all windows, without losing the historic character and fabric of the building. These options have not been pursued by the applicants as it is understood that the funding stream from Scottish Government only allows for complete replacement.

#### **Development Plan Policy Assessment**

National and local Planning policy requires that historically appropriate windows are retained and repaired. Replacement windows will only be supported where the existing windows are either completely beyond repair or are a later inappropriate alternative of no historic or architectural merit. The existing windows at Burghfield are a good example of traditional windows (in comparatively good condition) in a historic building within the Dornoch Conservation Area. The condition survey submitted in support of the planning application concludes that they are capable of repair. Whilst the Planning Authority are not against refurbishment, modernisation and upgrade of windows, the justification for such needs to be clearly set out, with options appraisal and conditions survey being prepared and available in support of an application. As such the application submitted does not present any justification for the replacement of the historic and traditional windows in this important historic building in the Dornoch Conservation Area and therefore the development proposals as set out by the Planning application cannot be supported under current policy and guidance.

Accordingly, **it is considered that the proposal** – the removal of existing single pane sash and case windows from a prominent period building within the Dornoch Conservation area – **does not accord with the Development Plan policies:**

- 28 Sustainable Design – the proposal would have a significantly detrimental impact on community residential amenity; and does not demonstrate sensitive siting and high quality design in keeping with local character and historic environment; and does not make use of appropriate materials, whereby the existing timber windows can be repaired and upgraded without their removal
- 34 Settlement Development Areas – the proposal is considered to have a significantly detrimental impact on the built and cultural heritage of the Dornoch Conservation Area
- 57 Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage – the proposal would have an unacceptable impact on the amenity and heritage resource of the Dornoch Conservation Area

#### 8.5 **Other Considerations – not material**

None

#### 8.6 **Matters to be secured by Section 75 Agreement**

None

### 9. **CONCLUSION**

9.1 All relevant matters have been taken into account when appraising this application. It is considered that the proposal does not accord with the principles and policies contained within the Development Plan and is unacceptable in terms of applicable material considerations.

The rationale behind the proposed replacement of the existing windows appears to be the availability of a one off funding stream. Whilst there is a degree of sympathy for the College in its attempts to offset costs in this manner this must be balanced against the Councils conservation remit. In this regard the justification for not repairing and installing slimline secondary glazing, which would be our preferred option has not been made. As such the current proposal cannot be supported. It is recommended that application be refused.

### 10. **RECOMMENDATION**

**Action required before decision issued** N

**Subject to the above,** it is recommended the application be **REFUSED** for the following reasons:

The proposal does not accord with the Highland Wide Local Development Plan:

1. Policy 28 Sustainable Design - the applicants have failed to demonstrate the requirements for the replacement of the existing windows and the proposal would have a significantly detrimental impact on community residential amenity; and does not demonstrate high quality design in keeping with local character and historic environment; and does not make use of appropriate materials, whereby the existing timber windows can be repaired and upgraded without their removal
2. Policy 34 Settlement Development Areas – the applicants have failed to demonstrate the requirements for the replacement of the existing windows and the proposal is considered to have a significantly detrimental impact on the built and cultural heritage of the Dornoch Conservation Area through the loss of the window fabric of the building
3. Policy 57 Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage – the applicants have failed to demonstrate the requirements for the replacement of the existing windows and the proposal would have an unacceptable impact on the amenity and heritage resource of the Dornoch Conservation Area through the loss of the window fabric of the building.

Signature: Dafydd Jones

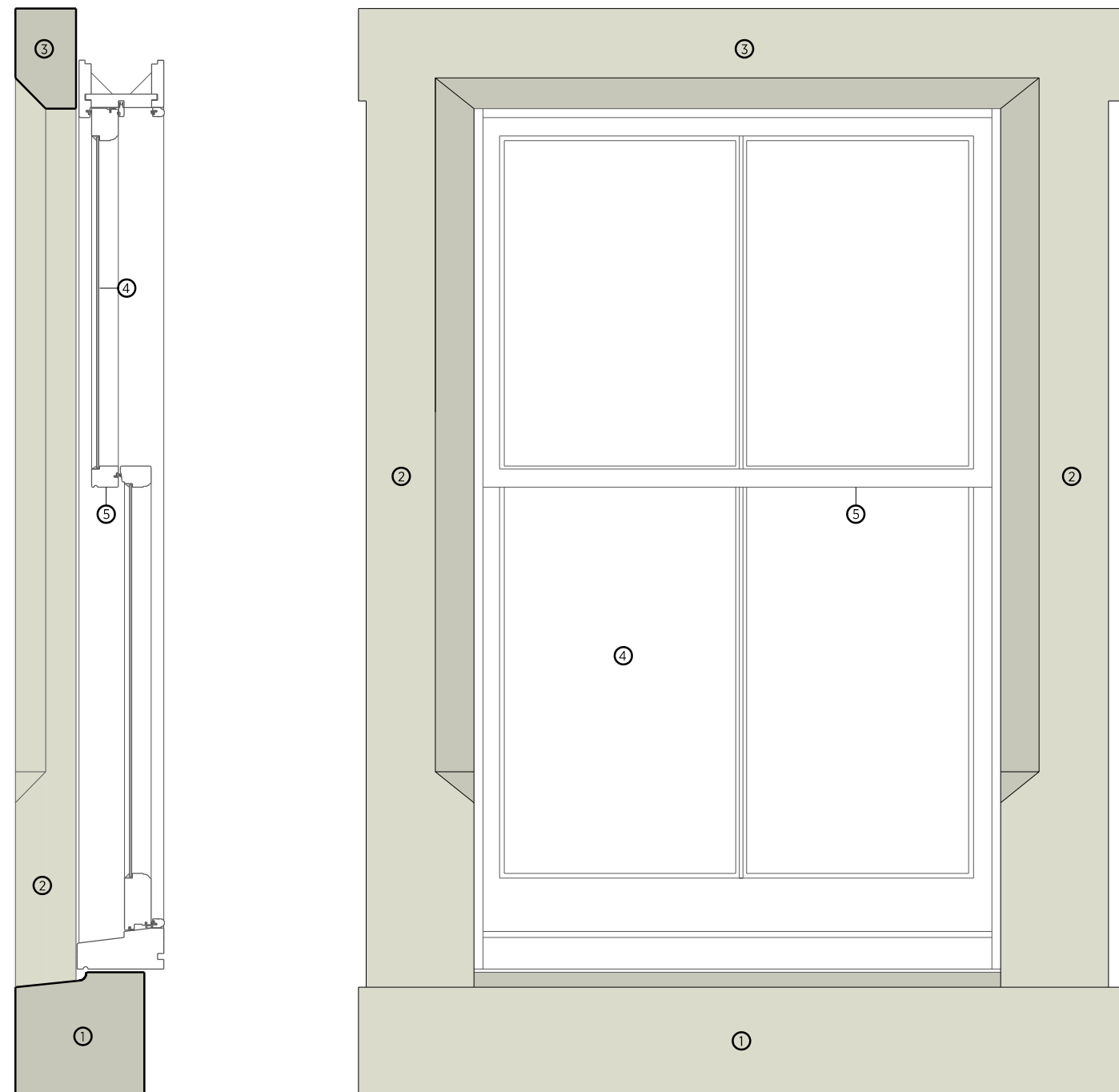
Designation: Area Planning Manager North

Author: Bob Robertson

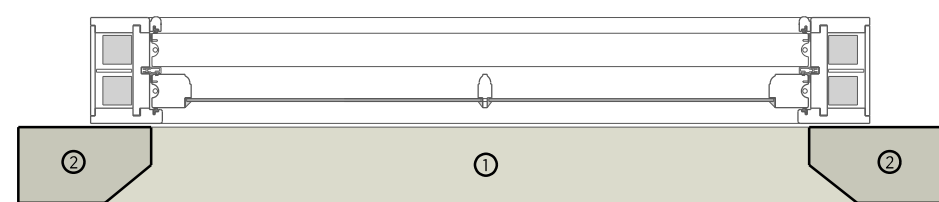
Background Papers: Documents referred to in report and in case file.

Relevant Plans:

- Window replacement detail 5295-31-001
- Window replacement detail 5295-31-002
- Proposed elevation plan 5295-20-102
- Proposed elevation plan 5295-20-103
- Ground floor window plan 5292-00-104

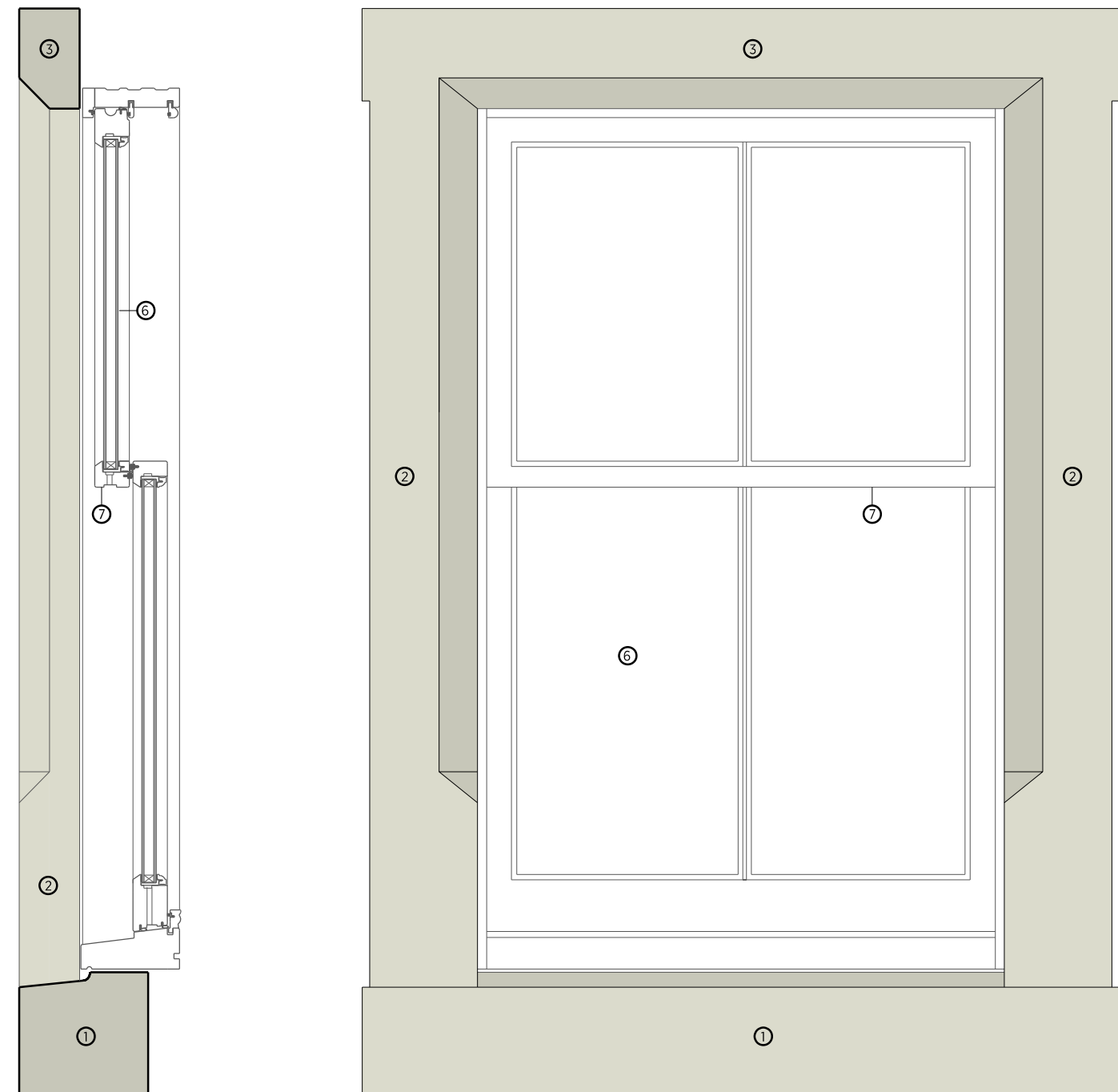


Existing Window Elevation

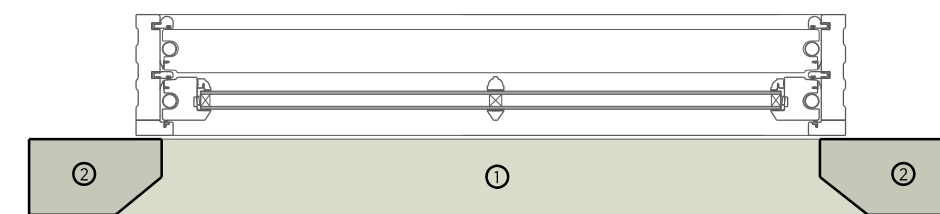


**EXISTING BOX SASH WINDOW TYPICAL DETAILS**

SCALE 1:10



Proposed Window Elevation



**OPTION A. PROPOSED BOX SASH WINDOW TYPICAL DETAILS**

SCALE 1:10

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NOTES

LEGEND

1. Existing stone window cill
2. Existing stone window jamb
3. Existing stone window lintel
4. Single glazing
5. Existing sliding sash & case timber windows. Colour white
6. 24mm (4-16-4) double glazed argon filled sealed units
7. Proposed Timber Box Sash hardwood windows by KAT with spiral spring balance mechanism. Finish: Factory applied 3 coat paint. Colour: white to match existing

REV.	DATE	AMENDMENT	KEYPLAN
A	21/01/2015	Issued for Planning	

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SCALE@A2	DATE	ORIGINATOR	CHECKED	AUTHORISED
1:10	21.01.2015	RP	JD	JD

PROJECT  
**UHI Dornoch**

TITLE  
**Window Replacement Detail  
Option A Sash Window**

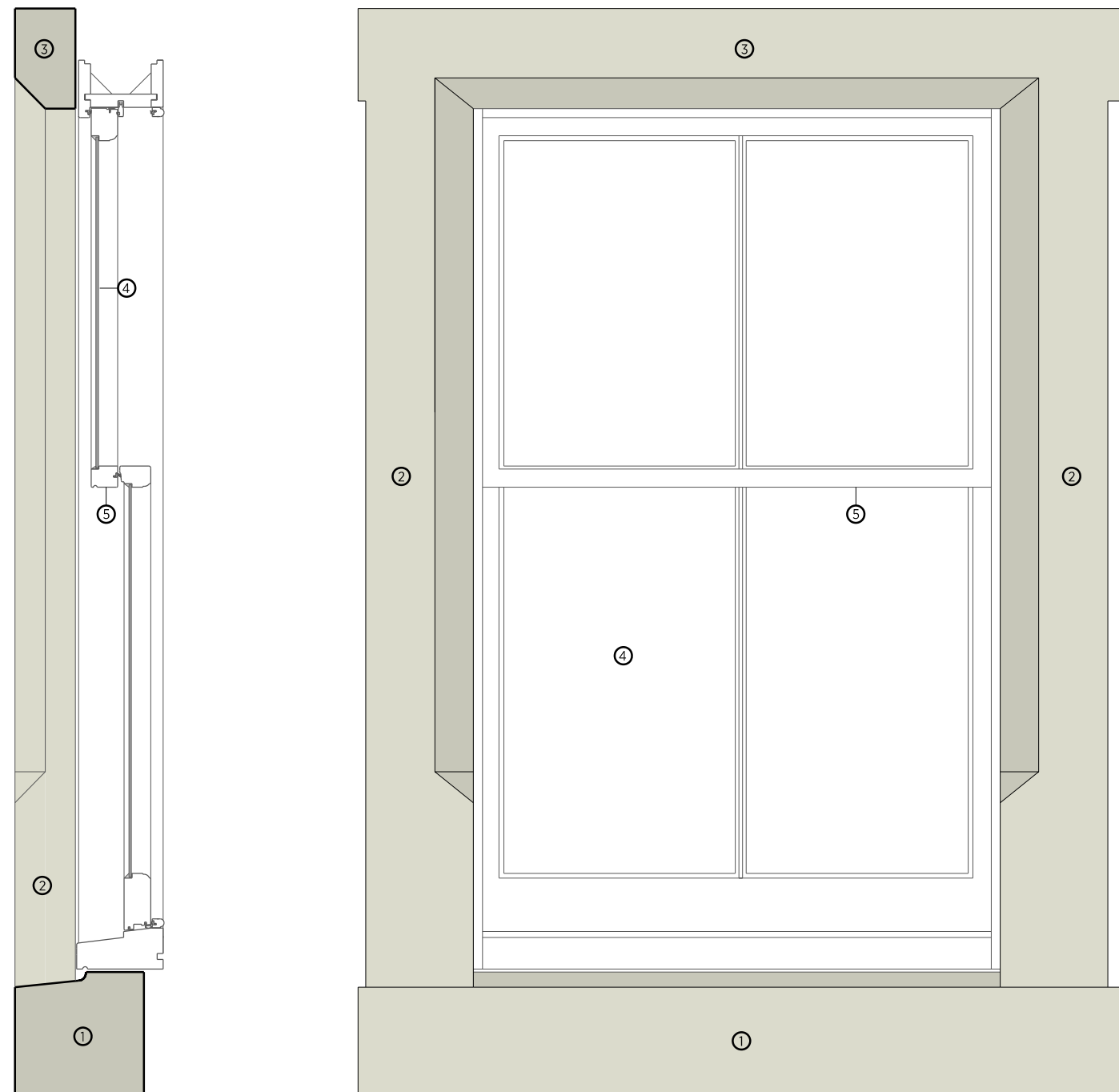
STATUS  
**PLANNING**

DRAWING NO.  
**5292 - 31 - 001**

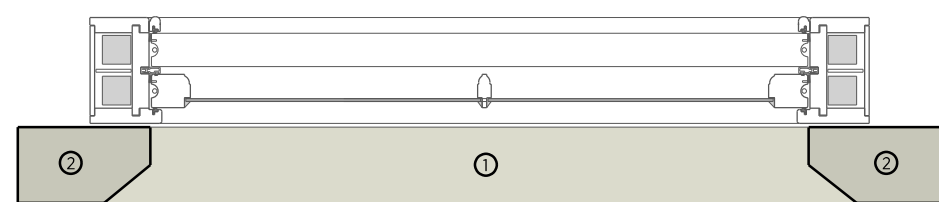
REV.

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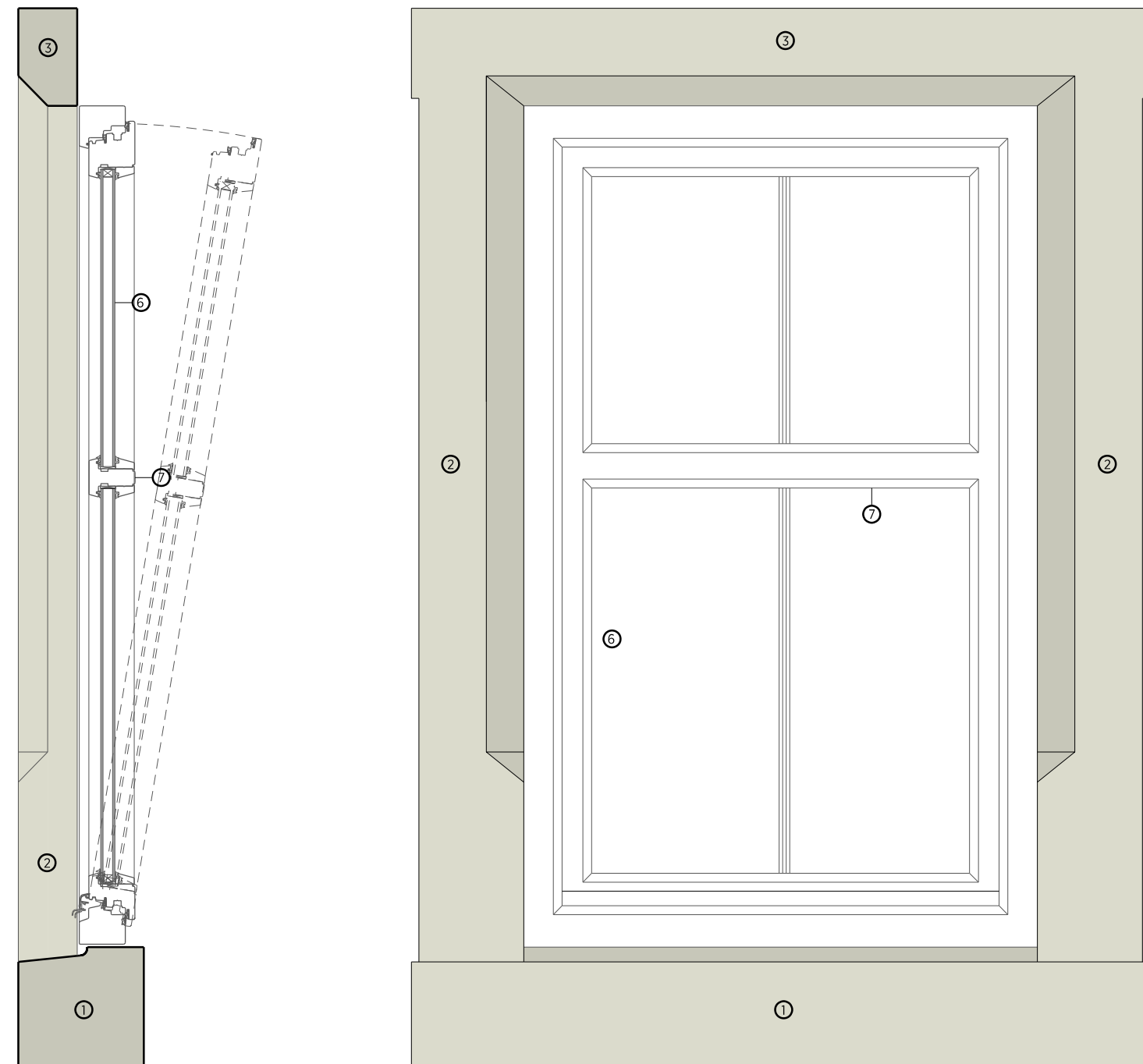


Existing Window Elevation

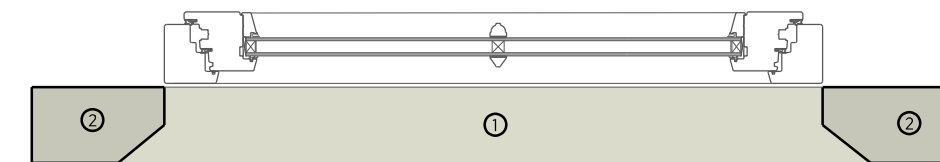


**EXISTING BOX SASH WINDOW TYPICAL DETAILS**

SCALE 1:10



Proposed Window Elevation



**OPTION B. PROPOSED TILT & TURN WINDOW TYPICAL DETAILS**

SCALE 1:10

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NOTES

LEGEND

1. Existing stone window sill
2. Existing stone window jamb
3. Existing stone window lintel
4. Single glazing
5. Existing sliding sash & case timber windows. Colour white
6. 24mm (4-16-4) double glazed argon filled sealed units
7. Proposed Tilt & Turn hardwood windows by KAT. Finish: Factory applied 3 coat paint. Colour: white to match existing

REV.	DATE	AMENDMENT	KEYPLAN
A	26/01/2015	Issued for Planning	

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SCALE@A2 DATE 21.01.2015 ORIGINATOR RP CHECKED JD AUTHORISED JD

PROJECT  
**UHI Dornoch**  
TITLE  
**Window Replacement Detail  
Option B Tilt & Turn**

STATUS  
**PLANNING**

DRAWING NO.  
**5292 - 31 - 002**

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West Elevation



East Elevation



South Elevation



North Elevation



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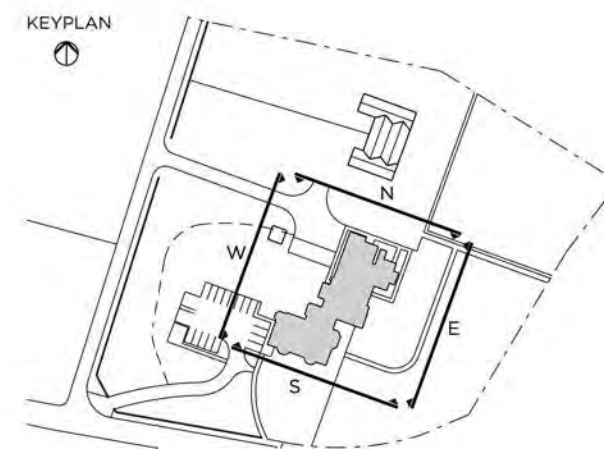
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NOTES

REV. DATE AMENDMENT

KEYPLAN



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SCALE@A2 DATE 23.01.2015 ORIGINATOR SD CHECKED RP AUTHORISED JD

PROJECT  
**UHI Dornoch**

TITLE  
**Proposed Elevations**

STATUS  
**Planning**  
DRAWING NO.  
**5292 - 20 - 102**

REV.

-

Plotted 21/07/2015  
Filename: S:\Projects\5250\_etc\5292\CAD\01\02\_Planning\20\_102\_Burghfield Proposed Elevations.dgn





West Elevation



East Elevation



South Elevation



North Elevation



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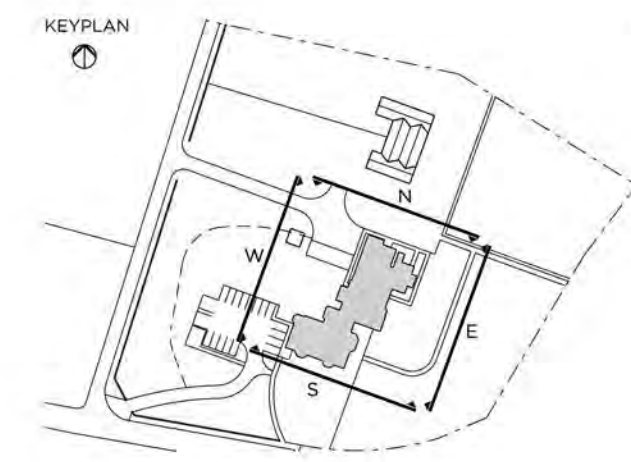
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- NOTES**
- LEGEND**
- Proposed new timber box sash windows denoted in red
  - Proposed Timber Box Sash hardwood windows by KAT with spiral spring balance mechanism. 24mm (4-16-4) double glazed argon filled sealed units. Finish: Factory applied 3 coat paint. Colour: white to match existing.
  - A Refer to drawing no. 5292-31-001 for proposed timber box sash window typical detail; and drawing no. 5292-31-002 for alternative timber tilt-in window detail
  - B NOTE: Stained glass windows are not subject of this application

REV.	DATE	AMENDMENT



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1:200	23.01.2015	SD	RP	JD

PROJECT  
**UHI Dornoch**

TITLE  
**Proposed Elevations with Replacement Windows**

STATUS  
**Planning**

DRAWING NO.  
**5292 - 20 - 103**

REV.  
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TITLE  
**Ground Floor Plan Window Replacement**

PROJECT  
**UHI Dornoch**

SCALE@A3 1:200 DATE 23.01.2015 ORIGINATOR SD CHECKED RP AUTHORISED JD



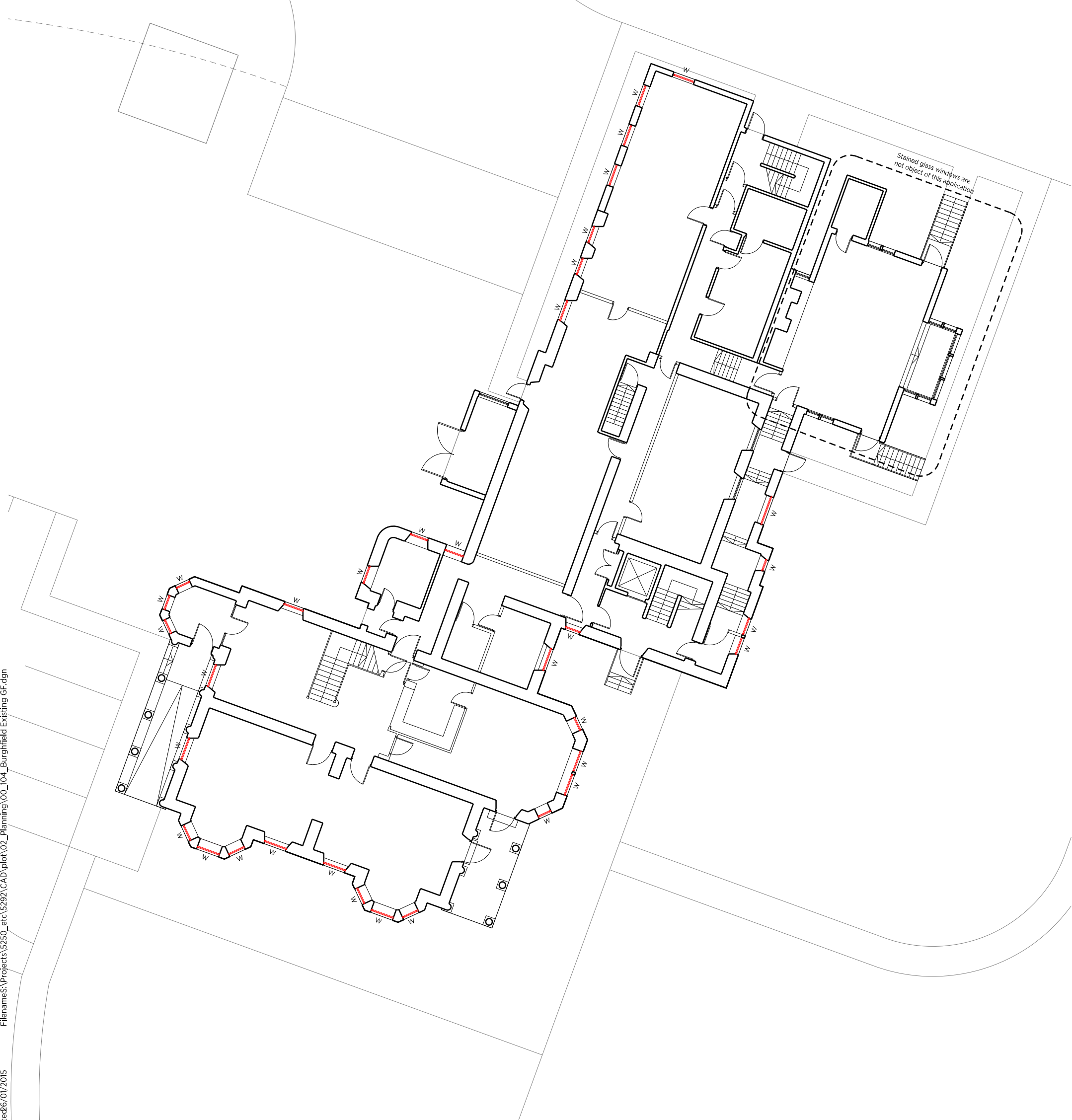
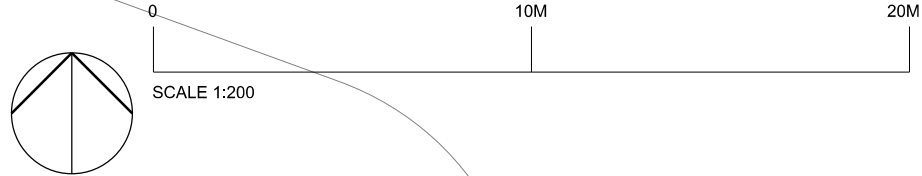
NOTES  
W Denotes proposed Timber Box Sash hardwood window replacement

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- 23/01/2015 Issued for Planning

STATUS  
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DRAWING NO.  
**5292-00-104**

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