Agenda Item	6.10
Report No	PLN/066/26

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: North Planning Applications Committee

Date: 25 November 2026

Report Title: 26/02529/FUL: Mr Alex Wood

Fairy Glen Cottage 3 Sheader Uig Portree IV51 9YF

Report By: Area Planning Manager North

Purpose/Executive Summary

Description: Change roof covering from thatch to slate

Ward: 10 - Eilean A' Cheò

Development category: Local Development

Reason referred to Committee: Referral by Ward Members

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 **REFUSE** the application as set out in section 11 of the report

1. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

1.1 This proposal seeks planning permission to change the roof covering from thatch to synthetic slate.

1.3 Pre Application Consultation: None

1.4 Supporting Information: Roofing material information sheet and Bat survey

1.5 Variations: None

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 The site is a detached house, “Fairy Glen Cottage”, in Sheader near Uig, and lies a short distance to the south of the U4768 Sheader public road, approximately 1km west of the A87. The site lies within the Trotternish and Tianavaig Special Landscape Area.

2.2 The house is relatively new (10/02334/FUL) constructed on the site of a former ruined crofthouse, with some materials from the previous buildings being reused. In addition, the site contained the remains of what appeared to be an earlier traditional blackhouse. The new house was designed to closely reflect the traditional blackhouse style, incorporating a thatched roof and natural stone walls. Stone recovered from the former buildings was reused in the external wall elevations, helping to retain the site's historic character. The house is currently used as a short term let.

2.3 Existing residential properties and holiday accommodation are located to the east and west of the site. Sheader Road lies at a lower elevation than the application site. Access to the site is shared with ‘Conon View’ immediately to the northwest.

3. PLANNING HISTORY

3.1	02/08/2005	05/00192/OUTSL - Erection of House	Permission granted
3.2	04/10/2010	10/02334/FUL - Demolition of existing ruins, erection of thatched cottage (incorporating stone from ruins), improvement of existing access, and installation of septic tank and soakaway	Permission granted

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

4.1 Advertised: No

Date Advertised: n/a

Representation deadline: 23.07.26 (Neighbour Notifications)

Timeous representations: None

Late representations: None

4.2 Material considerations raised are summarised as follows: None

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 None

6. DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICY

The following policies are relevant to the assessment of the application

6.1 National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) (2023)

Policy 1 - Tackling the Climate and Nature Crises
Policy 2 - Climate Mitigation and Adaptation
Policy 3 - Biodiversity
Policy 4 - Natural Places
Policy 14 - Design Quality and Place
Policy 16 - Quality Homes

6.2 Highland-wide Local Development Plan (HwLDP) (2012)

28 - Sustainable Design
29 - Design Quality & Place-making
36 - Development in the Wider Countryside
57 - Natural, Built & Cultural Heritage
58 - Protected Species
61 - Landscape
66 - Surface Water Drainage

6.3 West Highland and Islands Local Development Plan (WestPlan) (2019)

No site-specific policies apply.

6.4 Highland Council Supplementary Planning Policy Guidance

Sustainable Design Guide (Jan 2013)
Highland Council Planning Guidance: House extensions and Other Residential Alterations

7. OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

7.1 Scottish Government Planning Policy and Guidance

Designing Streets

Creating Places

Uig Local Place Plan

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.

Determining Issues

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.

Planning Considerations

8.3 The key considerations in this case are:

a) compliance with the development plan and other planning policy

b) siting, design, and amenity

c) impact on landscape

d) protected species

e) impact on infrastructure and services

f) any other material considerations

Development plan/other planning policy

8.4 All planning applications must now be determined in accordance with the provisions of NPF4 and the existing Local Development Plan, unless material considerations provide justification otherwise. If there is an inconsistency between NPF4 policies and an LDP which was adopted before 13 February 2023, the NPF prevails under Section 24(3) of the 1997 Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended). In this instance, the LDP was adopted in September 2019, which is before the adoption of NPF4. Hence, NPF4 would prevail.

8.5 NPF4 Policies 1-3 apply to all development proposals nationwide. When considering all development proposals, significant weight will be given to the global climate and nature crises. Development proposals will be sited and designed to minimise lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions as far as possible. Development proposals will contribute to the enhancement of biodiversity, including where relevant, restoring degraded habitats, and building and strengthening nature networks and the connections between them. Policy 3(c) excludes applications for individual householder development from this requirement.

8.6 NPF4 Policy 4d states that development proposals which affect a site designated as a Landscape Area in the Local Development Plan will only be supported where development will not have significant adverse effects on the integrity of the area or the qualities for which it has been identified.

8.7 Policy 57 of HwLDP describes Special Landscape Areas (SLA) under locally and regionally important features. For such features, developments are allowed if they

can satisfactorily demonstrate that they will not have an unacceptable impact on the natural environment, amenity, and heritage resource.

8.8 Policy 61 of HwLDP states that new developments should be designed to reflect the landscape characteristics and special qualities identified in the Landscape Character Assessment of the area in which they are proposed. This will include consideration of the appropriate scale, form, pattern and construction materials, as well as the potential cumulative effect of developments where this may be an issue.

8.9 The proposed brown roof colour, by virtue of its discordant appearance and lack of relationship with the established local roofscape, would not represent an appropriately integrated design response within this sensitive landscape setting. The proposal would therefore not comply with NPF4 Policy 4(d) or HwLDP Policies 57 and 61, as detailed in Sections 8.14 and 8.15.

8.10 NPF4 Policy 4(f) states that development proposals likely to have an adverse effect on species protected by legislation will only be supported where the relevant statutory tests are met. Where there is reasonable evidence that a protected species may be present on, or affected by, a development site, steps must be taken to establish its presence.

8.11 Similarly, HwLDP Policy 58 requires a protected species survey, and where necessary mitigation measures, where there is good reason to believe protected species may be present or affected, prior to determination of the application.

8.12 A bat survey assessed the property as having negligible suitability for roosting bats, with no suitable roosting features identified.

8.13 NPF4 Policy 14 states that proposals will be designed to improve the quality of an area and be consistent with the 6 qualities of successful places: Healthy, Pleasant, Connected, Distinctive, Sustainable, and Adaptable. Development proposals that are poorly designed or detrimental to the amenity of the surrounding area will not be supported. While the proposed synthetic slate is acceptable as a roofing material, the proposed brown finish does not reflect the prevailing grey/black roofscape or established architectural character in the surrounding area. The brown finish would therefore appear visually discordant and would not reinforce the distinctive character and identity of the locality.

8.14 Policy 28 of HwLDP reinforces the requirements for development to be considered in terms of siting, design, and in keeping with local character and historic and natural environment and in making use of appropriate materials. The proposed brown roof finish does not demonstrate sufficient sensitivity to this local character and would harm the amenity of the wider area.

8.15 HwLDP Policy 29 requires any application to make a positive, net contribution to the architectural and visual quality of the place within which it is proposed. Applicants should demonstrate sensitivity and respect towards the local distinctiveness of the landscape, architecture, design and layouts in their proposals. Accordingly, while the synthetic slate material is acceptable, its proposed brown finish is not considered acceptable, and the proposal would not comply with NPF4 Policy 14 or HwLDP Policies 28 and 29 in this respect.

8.16 NPF4 Policy 16g states that householder development proposals will be supported where they:

i. do not have a detrimental impact on the character or environmental quality of the home and the surrounding area in terms of size, design and materials; and
ii. do not have a detrimental effect on the neighbouring properties in terms of physical impact, overshadowing or overlooking.

The proposed brown roof finish would have adverse impact on the established character of the surrounding area, as it does not reflect the prevailing grey/black roofscape of the surrounding area. The proposal therefore does not comply with NPF4 Policy 16(g)(i).

8.17 HwLDP Policy 36 places emphasis on ensuring that development outwith Settlement Development Areas is appropriately sited and designed, and that it aligns with the established landscape character and its capacity.

8.18 The proposal is not considered to accord with the Development Plan policies relating to design, and in particular to the colour of the proposed colour of the synthetic slate.

Siting, design, and amenity

8.19 The proposal seeks to replace the existing thatched roof with brown synthetic slates, while retaining the existing hipped roof form. The applicant has advised that the cost of repairing the thatch is unaffordable and that replacement is necessary to ensure the cottage remains watertight.

8.20 Given that the cottage is of relatively recent construction, the principle of replacing the thatch with synthetic slate is considered acceptable. However, the proposed brown colour raises concerns in relation to local character and visual integration. The surrounding built form is predominantly characterised by white or off-white rendered walls with darker grey or black roofs, including slate and metal finishes. These materials and finishes are not only limited to this area and are established across the Highlands. Brown slate roofing is not characteristic of the established architectural vernacular and would appear visually discordant within the surrounding roofscape.

8.21 Traditional slate roofing associated with the Scottish built vernacular is generally characterised by darker grey to black tones. The proposed brown finish would therefore not reflect this traditional material palette or the established appearance of roofing. Natural brown slate is not found in Scotland and does not form part of the local architectural vernacular. A dark grey or black synthetic slate would provide a more sympathetic response to both the local architectural character and the existing roofscape. This is particularly important given the property's location within the Trotternish and Tianavaig Special Landscape Area, where the colour and appearance of external materials influence how development integrates with its landscape setting.

8.22 Accordingly, while the use of synthetic slate is acceptable, the proposed brown finish is not considered acceptable as it would have an adverse impact on the

established architectural and visual character of the surrounding area. The introduction of a roof colour that is not characteristic of the locality would result in a visually intrusive feature that would harm the visual amenity of the wider area. The applicant has been advised of these concerns, and discussions have taken place regarding the use of alternative colour such as grey or black or an alternative material such as metal sheeting; however, the applicant has indicated that they are unwilling to amend this.

Impact on landscape

8.23 The site lies within the Trotternish and Tianavaig SLA, a landscape characterised by dramatic landforms, distinctive geology and an exposed coastal setting. The visual integration of development, including the choice of external materials and colours, is therefore an important consideration.

8.24 Notwithstanding the relatively limited scale of the proposed roof, the colour of the roof covering would influence the appearance of the building within its wider setting. Roofs are visually prominent within the exposed Skye landscape, particularly where buildings are viewed against surrounding hillsides from nearby roads and settlements.

8.25 In this context, the proposed brown roof colour would not reflect the prevailing character of built development within the area and would appear at odds with the established visual character of the settlement and wider SLA. A dark grey or black finish would provide a more appropriate response, being more consistent with the prevailing appearance of roofs in the surrounding area. Therefore, the colour would not respond appropriately to the established built and landscape character.

Protected Species

8.26 As the works involve removal of the existing roof covering, consideration has been given to potential impacts on bats. A bat survey was undertaken, including a review of publicly available records, which identified bat species within the wider area. However, the property was assessed as having low suitability for roosting bats, with no suitable roosting features identified. No further survey work is therefore required.

8.27 The bat survey recommends a precautionary approach during roof removal, with works undertaken during daylight hours. Should bats be encountered, works should cease and ecological advice be sought. External lighting should also be minimised to avoid disturbance to nocturnal foraging activity. Subject to these precautionary measures, no significant effects on bats are anticipated.

Impact on infrastructure and services

8.28 None.

Other material considerations

8.29 There are no other material considerations.

Non-material considerations

8.30 None

Developer Contributions

8.31 None

9. CONCLUSION

9.1 While the use of synthetic slate is acceptable, the proposed brown colour finish is not characteristic of the established local roofscape, which is predominantly defined by darker grey and black roofing. Brown is not a traditional slate colour in Scotland. Traditional slate roofing across Skye and the Highlands generally reflects darker tones of black or grey. The brown finish would therefore appear visually discordant, fail to respect the local architectural vernacular, and would not reinforce the distinctive character and identity of the locality, contrary to NPF4 Policy 14.

9.2 The proposal would also fail to demonstrate the sensitive design, use of appropriate materials and respond to local character sought by HwLDP Policy 28. Accordingly, the proposed brown roof finish would have an unacceptable adverse impact on the architectural and visual character of the surrounding area and is considered contrary to NPF4 Policies 14 and 16(g)(i) and HwLDP Policies 28 and 29.

9.3 Although limited in scale, the brown roof finish would be visually discordant with the prevailing grey/black roofscape and would not integrate satisfactorily with the established character of the settlement, the exposed surrounding landscape, or its sensitive SLA setting. A dark grey or black finish would provide a more appropriate response to the surrounding built and landscape character.

9.4 Accordingly, the proposal would not adequately safeguard the character and special qualities of the landscape and would therefore be contrary to NPF4 Policy 4(d) and HwLDP Policies 57 and 61.

9.5 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.

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

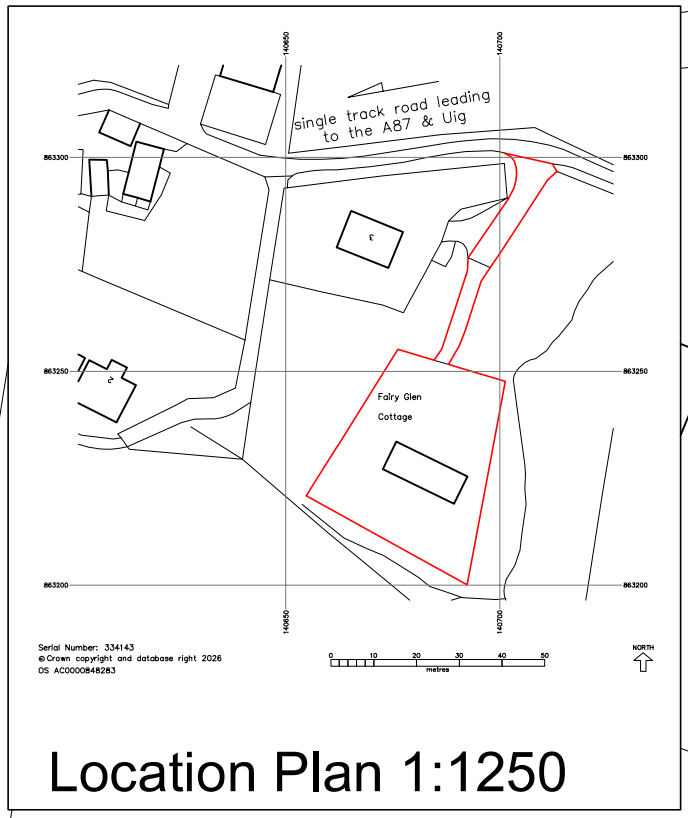
11. RECOMMENDATION

The application is recommended for refusal for the reasons set out below.

Reasons for Refusal

1.	The proposed brown finish does not reflect the local architectural vernacular and is not a traditional slate colour. It would appear visually discordant and would fail to reinforce local distinctiveness or demonstrate a sufficiently sensitive design response. Accordingly, the proposal would have an adverse impact on the character and visual quality of the surrounding area and would not comply with NPF4 Policies 14 (Design Quality and Place) and 16(g)(i) (Quality Homes), or HwLDP Policies 28 (Sustainable Design) and 29 (Design Quality & Place-making).
2.	The roof would be a prominent element within the Skye landscape. The brown finish would contrast with the established darker roofscape and would not integrate satisfactorily with the sensitive landscape setting or established visual character of the wider Trotternish and Tianavaig Special Landscape Area. The proposal would therefore fail to adequately safeguard and respond to the landscape character and qualities of the area and would not comply with NPF4 Policy 4 (Natural Places) or HwLDP Policies 57 (Natural, Built & Cultural Heritage) and 61 (Landscape).

Signature:	Bob Robertson
Designation:	pp Area Planning Manager North
Author:	Shanshvi Naik, Graduate Planner (North)
Background Papers:	Documents referred to in report and in case file.
Relevant Plans:	Plan 1 - JG5832 Rev 01 Site Plan
	Plan 2 - JG5834 Rev 01 Elevation Plan
	Plan 3 - JG5837 Rev 01 Roof Plan



Location Plan 1:1250

North

Site Plan 1:250

metres
0 5 10

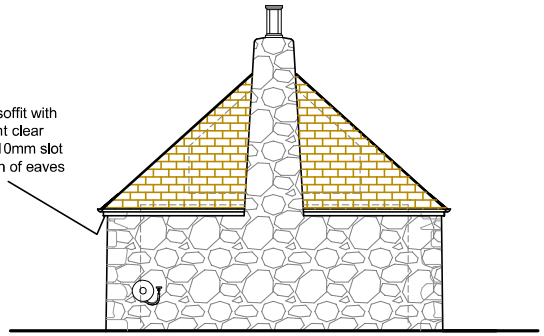
Red line indicates extent of planning development area (1762sq.m)

Contractor to ensure exact location of all services on site, overhead, underground and isolate, protect or relocate as necessary prior to commencing works.

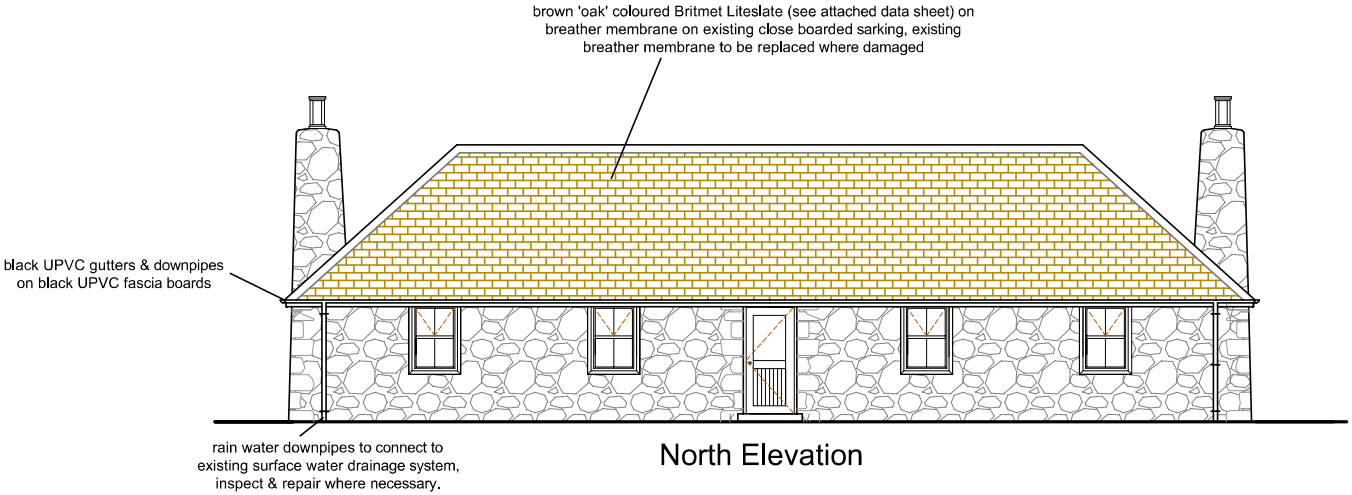
Existing house
Fairy Glen
Cottage

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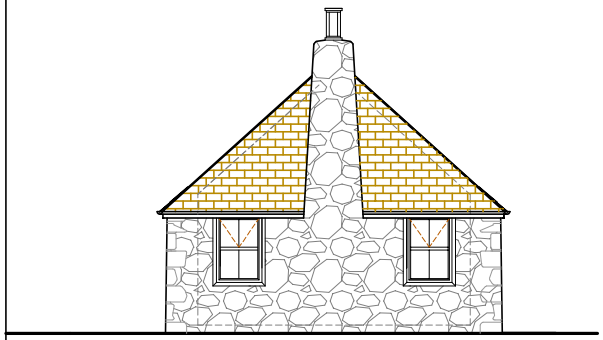
Drg. No. JG5832	Rev: 01	Date: 5.6.2026	Drawn JG	Chk'd
Status:	Pre planning – do not use for construction			
Title:	Proposed Site Plan			
Project:	3 Sheader, Uig, Isle of Skye			
Client:	Alex Wood			
Scale:	1: 250 on A3	Planning ref:		



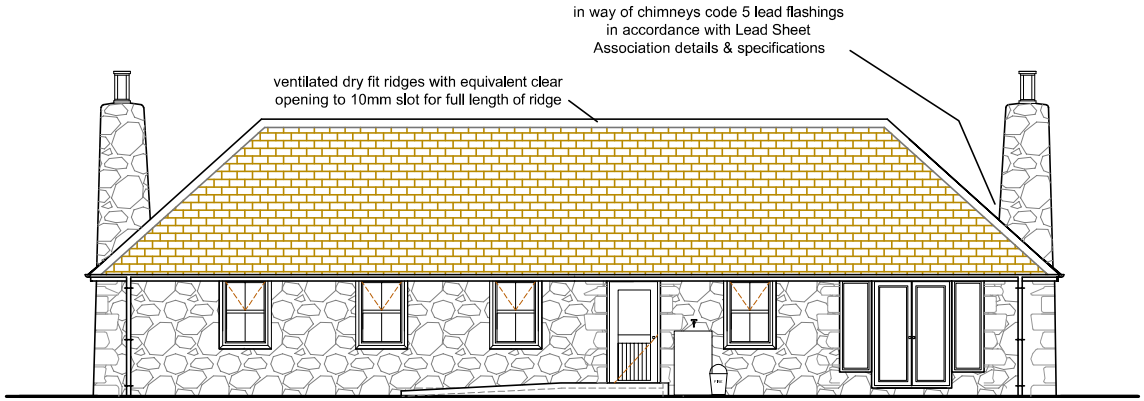
West Elevation



North Elevation

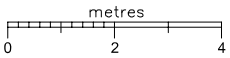


East Elevation



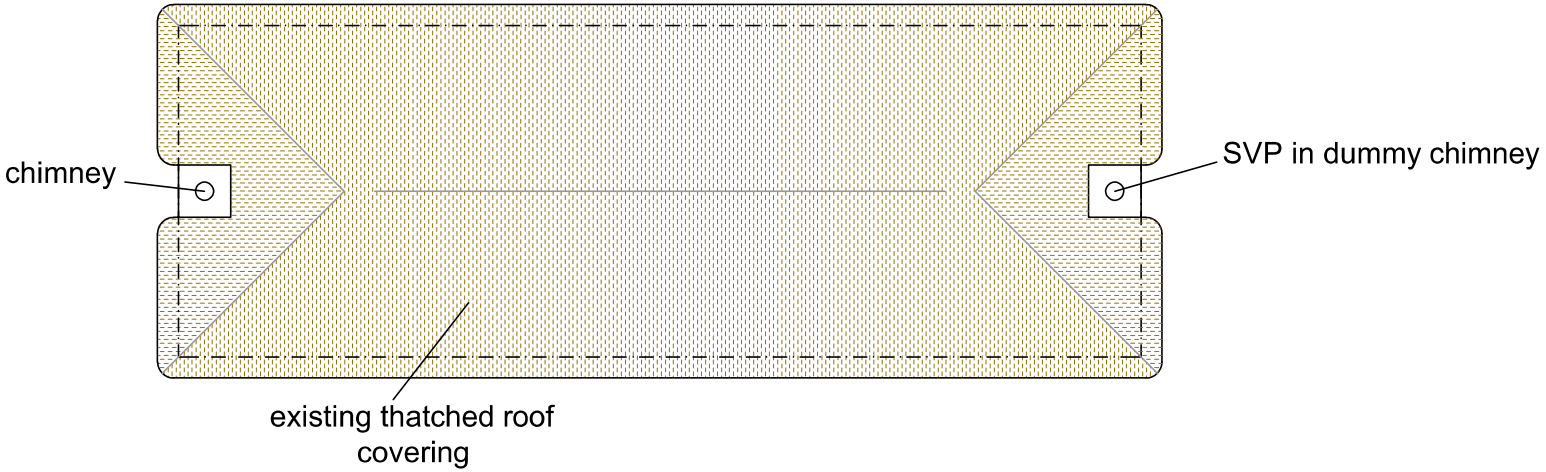
South Elevation

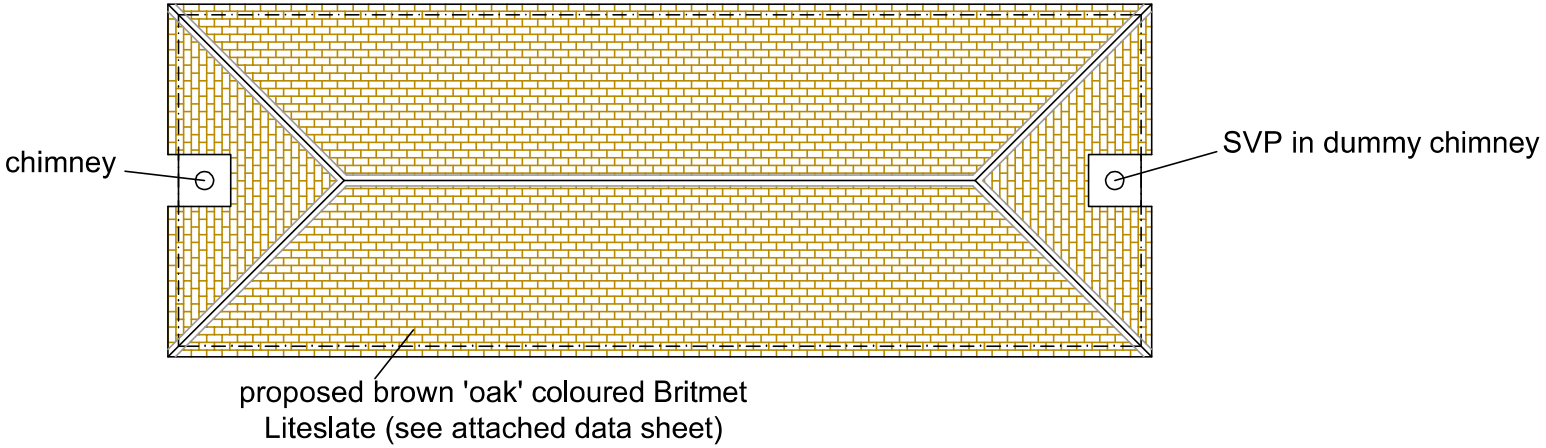
Proposed Elevations
1:100



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Drg. No.	JG5834	Rev: 01	Date: 5.6.2026	Drawn JG	Chk'd
Status:	Pre planning – do not use for construction				
Title:	Proposed Elevations				
Project:	3 Sheader, Uig, Isle of Skye				
Client:	Alex Wood				
Scale:	1:100 on A3		Planning ref:		





Existing & Proposed Roof Plans 1:100

metres
0 2 4

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Drg. No.	JG5837	Rev: 01	Date: 23.6.2026	Drawn JG	Chk'd
Status:	Pre planning – do not use for construction				
Title:	Existing & Proposed Roof Plans				
Project:	3 Sheader, Uig, Isle of Skye				
Client:	Alex Wood				
Scale:	1:100 on A3		Planning ref:		