Agenda Item	**7.4**
Report No	**PLS/67/26**

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: South Planning Applications Committee

Date: 2 December 2026

Report Title: 26/02045/FUL: Miss Tracy Moffitt

52 Carn Dearg Road, Claggan, Fort William, PH33 6QD

Report By: Area Planning Manager – South

Purpose/Executive Summary

Description: Change of use of flat to short term letting

Ward: 21 – Fort William and Ardnamurchan

Development category: N10B – Other Developments Local

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** Planning Permission as set out in section 11 of the report.

1. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

1.1 This application seeks planning permission for the change of use from a long-term residential property to a short-term letting unit. It appears that the property has recently been advertised and used for short term letting use, in advance of obtaining planning consent.

1.2 This is an existing flatted unit served by the public water supply and mains sewer connection. On street parking is shared with neighbouring properties on Carn Dearg Road.

1.3 Pre Application Consultation: None

1.4 Supporting Information:

Photographic information received 15.05.2026

Statement regarding occupancy, changeovers, waste management and parking received 04.09.2026

1.5 Variations: None

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 The property is located at the eastern periphery of Claggan which is a small suburban residential area to the northeast of Fort William. The site is located approximately 1.4km from Fort William Town Centre and railway station.

2.2 The application site comprises an existing three-bedroom flat located on the middle floor of a three-storey flatted residential block. The flat is accessed via a shared entrance serving five other flats within the block, with access to the accommodation provided via a communal internal stairwell. A shared courtyard area is located to the rear. Bins are stored to the rear and collected from the front of the property each week.

2.3 The housing stock in this part of Claggan predominantly comprises higher density flatted development. These properties were originally built as Council housing; however, a number have since transferred to private ownership, resulting in a mix of social housing and privately owned properties within the area.

3. PLANNING HISTORY

3.1 None

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

4.1 Advertised: Unknown Neighbour

Date Advertised: 18.06.2026

Representation deadline: 02.07.2026

4.2 Timeous representations: 0

Late representations: 0

5. CONSULTATIONS

5.1 **Lochaber Disability Access Panel:** No comment

6. DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICY

The following policies are relevant to the assessment of the application

6.1 **National Planning Framework 4 2023**

1 - Tackling the climate and nature crisis
2- Climate mitigation and adaptation
13 - Sustainable Transport
30 - Tourism

6.2 **Highland Wide Local Development Plan 2012**

28 - Sustainable Design
29 - Design Quality and Place-making
31 - Developer Contributions
34 - Settlement Development Areas
44 - Tourist Accommodation
56 - Travel

6.3 **West Highland and Islands Local Development Plan 2019**

Site within Fort William Settlement Development Area

6.4 **Highland Council Supplementary Planning Policy Guidance**

None

7. OTHER MATERIAL POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

7.1 Highland Council Non-Statutory Short-Term Let Control Area Planning Policy (2023)

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) loss of residential accommodation

c) impact on local character and neighbouring residential amenity

d) impact on servicing and infrastructure

Development plan/other planning policy

8.4 National Planning Framework 4 Policy 30 (Tourism) supports development proposals that contribute to the visitor economy where they are compatible with the surrounding area. Part (e) of the policy relates specifically to the reuse of existing buildings for short-term holiday letting. Development proposals will not be supported under this policy where the proposal would result in an unacceptable impact on local amenity or the character of a neighbourhood or area; or the loss of residential accommodation where such loss is not outweighed by demonstrable local economic benefits.

8.5 Highland wide Local Development Plan Policy 44 (Tourist Accommodation) offers support for tourist accommodation proposals within settlement boundaries where the proposal can be accommodated without adverse impacts on neighbouring uses, complies with Policy 28: Sustainable Design and does not prejudice the residential housing land supply.

8.6 Providing that the loss of the residential accommodation to short term let can be justified on the grounds of supporting the local economy, and that the proposal would not lead to an unacceptable impact on local amenity or the character of the neighbourhood or area, it could be considered to comply with the Development Plan.

Loss of residential accommodation

8.7 The Council's Non-Statutory Short-Term Lets within a Control Area Policy was introduced in 2023. Whilst no Short-Term Let Control Area currently applies within Lochaber, and the guidance does not form part of the Development Plan, it provides useful context regarding the planning issues commonly associated with short-term letting proposals. In particular, the guidance seeks to ensure that smaller residential properties remain available to meet local housing needs. The Council has recommended that Lochaber be included within the proposed Highland Rural Short-Term Let Control Area in recognition of the significant housing pressures experienced across the area.

8.8 The Planning Authority also has to have regard to the material consideration of the Housing Challenge declared by The Highland Council (June 2024) due to significant and ongoing pressures on housing availability, affordability and delivery across Highland, including Fort William. The Planning Authority therefore attaches significant weight to the retention of existing residential accommodation within communities experiencing housing pressures.

8.9 The proposal would result in the loss of an existing three-bedroom flat from the permanent housing stock. Flatted properties form an important component of the supply of smaller and more affordable housing within Fort William and are generally more accessible to first-time buyers, smaller households and those seeking lower-cost accommodation. The permanent loss of such accommodation to visitor use carries weight given the acknowledged housing pressures within Lochaber.

8.10 The application property is located within a predominantly residential flatted development rather than an area characterised by tourism-related accommodation. Unlike a detached dwelling, the property relies on shared access arrangements, communal circulation spaces and shared external facilities. These characteristics make the property particularly sensitive to the impacts associated with visitor accommodation and reduce its suitability for use as a short-term let.

Impact on local character and neighbouring residential amenity

8.11 As the proposal makes use of an existing flatted dwelling with no external alterations proposed, it would not result in a material impact on the visual character of the area or the streetscape. However, the flat is accessed via a communal stairwell and shares access to a rear garden. In suburban flatted developments, with communal and shared spaces, the high turnover of visitors typically associated with short term lets is not considered compatible with the residential character of such properties.

8.12 Long term residents and consideration for neighbouring residents are typical characteristics of suburban flatted developments, particularly where there are common access arrangements and shared facilities (garden ground, parking etc.). The use of the flat for short-term letting has the potential to cause noise and disturbance for residents within the building because of the possibility of guests coming and going in the evening periods and using the shared entrance on a more regular basis than normal domestic users. Residents of the building would also meet strangers on a regular basis using the common access and rear courtyard, resulting in increased activity within communal areas and an erosion of privacy and residents' sense of security. Disturbance from cleaning the flat during and after guest occupation would likely be more frequent than for normal residential users.

8.13 A key safe box is sited outside the front door, and guests receive the code and directions for access by mobile message. Changeovers and cleaning are currently undertaken by the applicant/owner. While the property may be effectively managed by the applicant, planning permissions relate to the property, not the owner concerned, and consideration must be given to the long-term protection of residential amenity for both existing and future occupants of the building.

8.14 In this case, the proposed change of use relates to a middle-floor flat with neighbouring residential properties above and below and access obtained through shared internal and external spaces. The nature of the accommodation, together with the increased turnover of visitors typically associated with short-term letting, creates a greater likelihood of noise, disturbance and activity within communal areas than would normally arise from permanent residential occupation. The proposal is therefore considered likely to result in an unacceptable impact on the amenity of neighbouring occupiers and is contrary to Policy 30(e) (Tourism) of National Planning

Framework 4 and Policies 28 (Sustainable Design) and 44 (Tourist Accommodation) of the Highland-wide Local Development Plan.

Impact on servicing and infrastructure

8.15 The property does not have dedicated parking. On-street parking is currently available. The applicant has advised that only one resident within the six flat block currently has a vehicle and at present there are lots of properties in the street with no car. The applicant has advised that two out of three bedrooms will be let with a maximum occupancy of four guests.

8.16 In the absence of dedicated parking, it is not possible to control the impact of the proposed change of use over the longer term. If a change of use were granted, up to three bedrooms could be let. The level of turnover and number of vehicles could exceed that typically associated with residential occupation. High turnover and greater vehicle numbers could potentially have a cumulative impact on existing on-street parking levels. However, local bus services run to Claggan and there are pedestrian links to the A82 and onward to Fort William. The property is considered to have suitable access to sustainable and active travel options. Active and sustainable travel links could off-set on-street parking demands.

8.17 The owner has advised that there are recycling arrangements inside the property including a waste bin, food bin and recycling bin. Most waste is sorted by the operator and deposited in the bins outside. These bins are stored in the communal rear area and put out for collection at the front of the property each week.

Other material considerations

8.18 There are no other material considerations.

Non-material considerations

8.19 The Planning Authority are aware that there may be other similar uses in the area that do not benefit from planning permission; any future planning applications for these would be assessed on their own merits against Development Plan policies and guidance/other material considerations available at the time.

9. CONCLUSION

9.1 The proposed change of use to provide short-term letting accommodation is within Claggan, a suburb of Fort William. The site lies within an area of strong residential character, where housing is the predominant land use.

9.2 The proposal would result in the change of use of an existing three-bedroom flat from permanent residential accommodation to visitor accommodation in the form of a short-term let. While no external alterations are proposed, and the proposal would support the visitor economy, the benefits of the development are not considered to outweigh the identified adverse impacts on the established flatted residential character of the area.

9.3 The proposal would remove a dwelling from the permanent housing stock in an area experiencing recognised housing pressures and would introduce a use characterised

by a frequent turnover of visitors within a flatted residential block that relies upon shared access, circulation and amenity spaces. The development would likely result in an unacceptable impact on the amenity of neighbouring residents through increased activity, noise and disturbance associated with visitor occupation. These impacts are not considered to be outweighed by the benefits associated with the contribution made to the local economy.

9.4 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

Action required before decision issued	N
Notification to Scottish Ministers	N
Conclusion of Section 75 Obligation	N
Revocation of previous permission	N

Subject to the above actions, it is recommended to **REFUSE** the application for the following reasons

1. The proposed change of use of the flat to a short-term let, by reason of its location within a flatted residential block served by shared access and amenity areas, would result in an unacceptable adverse impact on the established flatted residential character of the area, and on neighbouring residential amenity, through increased noise, disturbance and activity associated with visitor occupation. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy 30(e) (Tourism) of National Planning Framework 4 and Policies 28 (Sustainable Design) and 44 (Tourist Accommodation) of the Highland-wide Local Development Plan.

2. The proposal would result in the loss of a three-bedroom flat from permanent housing stock within an area experiencing significant housing pressure. The proposal has not demonstrated that this loss would be outweighed by local

economic benefits. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy 30(e) (Tourism) of National Planning Framework 4.

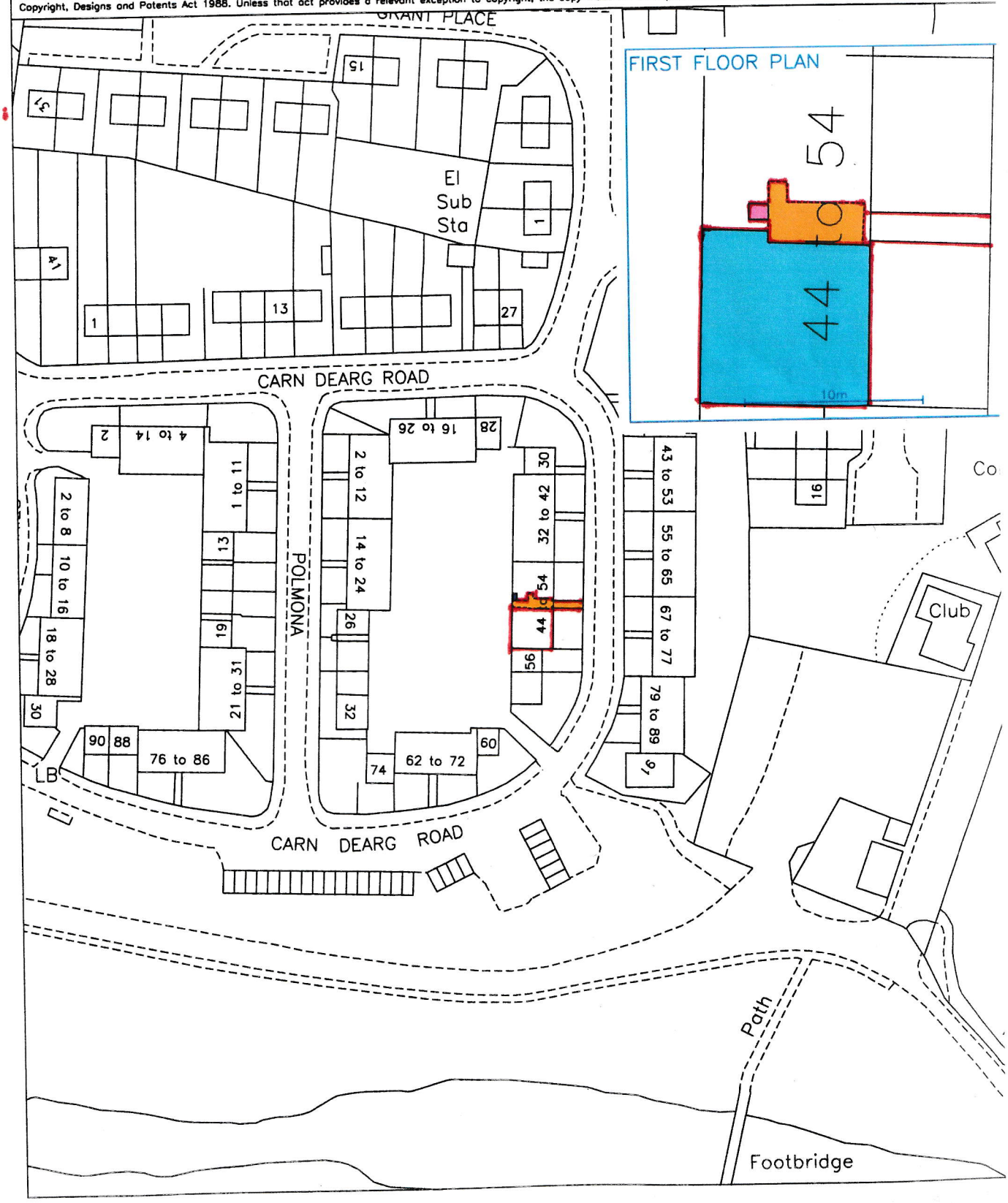
REASON FOR DECISION

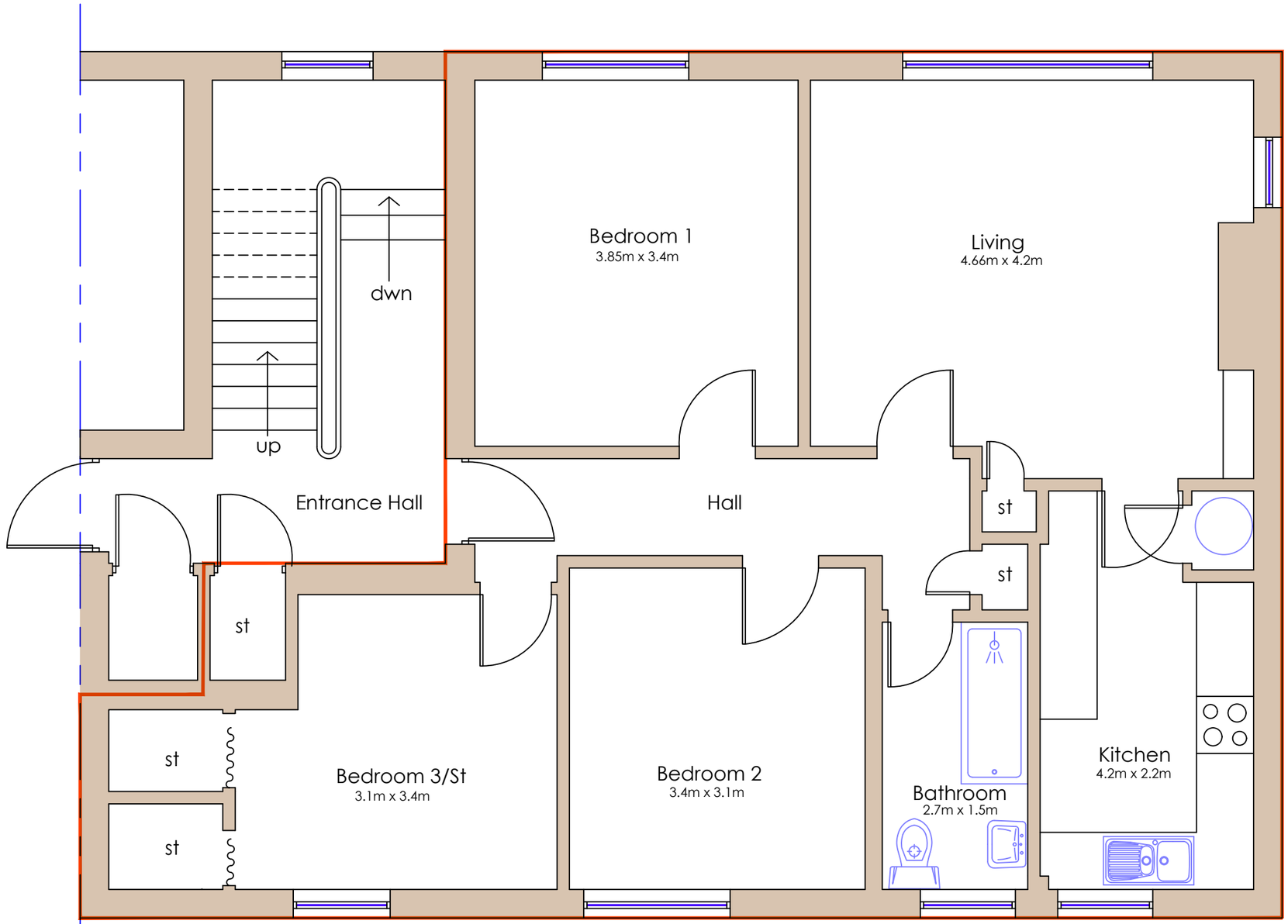
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Signature:	Bob Robertson
Designation:	Area Planning Manager South
Author:	Christine Millard
Background Papers:	Documents referred to in report and in case file.
Relevant Plans:	Plan 1 - 000003 Location Plan
	Plan 2 - 001 Floor Plan
	Plan 3 - 000002 Rev A Floor Plan

LAND REGISTER OF SCOTLAND	Officer's ID / Date	TITLE NUMBER
	4192 19/9/2007	**INV19752**
N ORDNANCE SURVEY NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE		Scale 1/1250
NN1174 NN17SW		Survey Scale 1/2500

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52 Carn Dearg Road Floor Plan
Scale 1:50

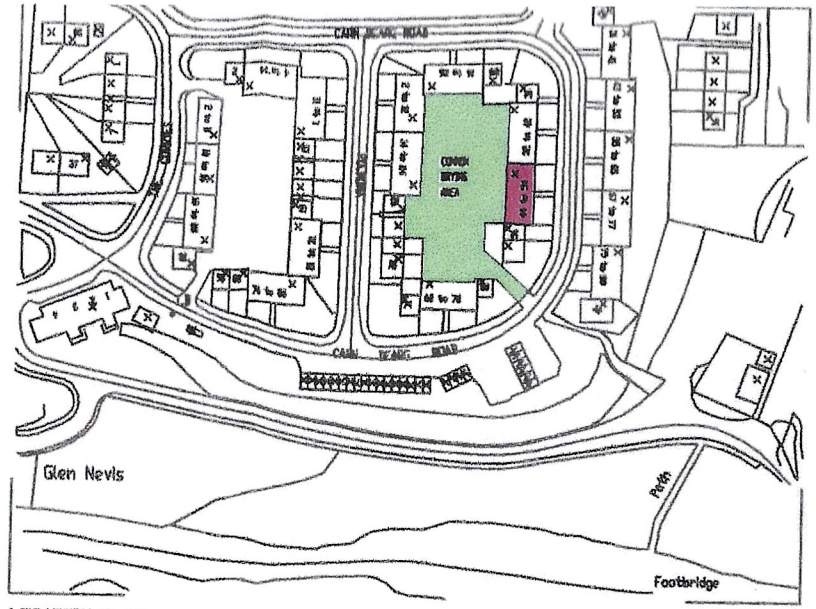
SCALE BAR 1:50

0 1 2 3 4 5

i-j McColl
Architect

Unit 21, Ben Nevis Industrial Estate, Fort William PH33 6PR
Email: info@ijarchitect.co.uk Tel: 01397 708567

project	52 Carn Dearg Road, Claggan, Fort William, PH33 6QQ			
client	Tracy Moffit			
detail	Floor Plan			dwg no. 001
scale 1:50	date June 26	job no. 0526	drawn IJM	



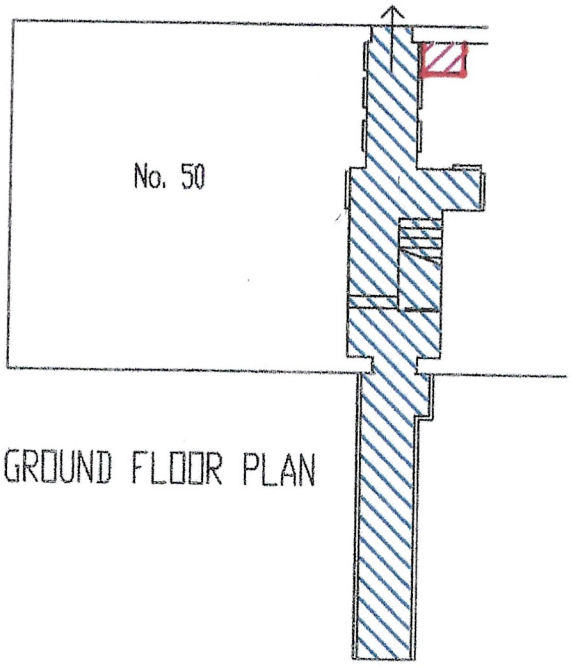
LOCATION PLAN

SCALE 1:2500

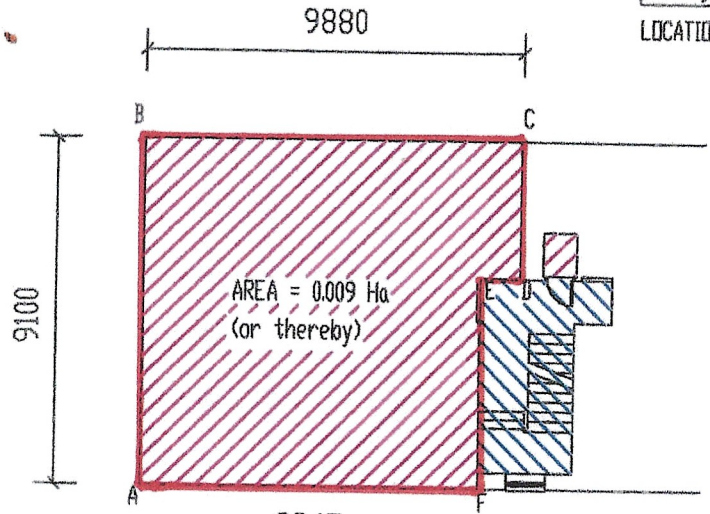
0m 50m 100m

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TO EXTERNAL COMMON DRYING AREA
(SHOWN GREEN ON LOCATION PLAN)



GROUND FLOOR PLAN



FIRST FLOOR PLAN

N

1:200

4m 0 4m 8m 12m 16m 20m