## **Application Ref: NP/12/0025**

Application Type

Full

**Grid Ref:** 

SN13140569

**Applicant** 

Mr D Lewis, The Hean Castle Estate Mr P Holden, Acanthus Holden Ltd

Agent Proposal

Change of use & conversion of vacant private school buildings to hotel use, including extensions to existing buildings, part and full demolition of classrooms

buildings, part and full demolition of classrooms, erection of new plant room building & associated car

parking and landscaping

Site Location

Netherwood School, Saundersfoot, Pembrokeshire,

**SA69 9BE** 

Case Officer

Julia Evans

### **Summary**

This is a full application for the change of use and conversion of a vacant public school to a fifteen bedroomed hotel, with associated function rooms and facilities, at Netherwood School, Saundersfoot. The proposal involves extensions and alterations to the existing buildings, part and full demolition of the modern classrooms on the site, and the erection of a new storage / boiler room, plus construction of a new car park and associated landscaping for the scheme.

The planning application and its Listed Building Consent application, have been brought before the Committee because the planning application is a major scheme.

The proposal would restore a use to a vacant listed building, bring employment into the area, and provide a community facility. Subject to the conditions suggested in the report, the proposal is not felt to harm the special historic and architectural qualities of the Listed Building, nor the special qualities of the National Park. The application is recommended to be delegated for determination by the Chief Executive / Director of Park and Direction / Head of Development Management for permission subject to the satisfactory completion of a Section 106 Legal Agreement and the suggested conditions.

## **Consultee Response**

Pembrokeshire Local Access Forum: Conditional Consent

Saundersfoot Community Council: Supporting

Coal Authority: No objection

Countryside Council for Wales: Reply - Request that the applicant is asked to submit further details of the bat access points in Proposed Garden

Store.

Dwr Cymru Welsh Water: No objection

**Environment Agency Wales**: Standard Advice

Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority Development Management Committee – 16<sup>th</sup> May 2012 PCC - Head of Public Protection: No Response Received

**Dyfed Archaeological Trust:** No objection

### **Public Response**

The application has been advertised and neighbour notifications have been undertaken. At the time of writing this report, no responses had been received.

### Policies considered

LDP Policy 01 - National Park Purposes and Duty

LDP Policy 07 - Countryside

LDP Policy 08 - Special Qualities

LDP Policy 09 - Light Pollution

LDP Policy 11 - Protection of Biodiversity

LDP Policy 15 - Conservation of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park

LDP Policy 26 - Inactive Mineral Sites

LDP Policy 29 - Sustainable Design

LDP Policy 30 - Amenity

LDP Policy 31 - Minimising Waste

LDP Policy 32 - Surface Water Drainage

LDP Policy 33 - Renewable Energy

LDP Policy 35 - Visitor Economy

LDP Policy 48 - Community Facilities and Infrastructure Requirements

LDP Policy 52 - Sustainable Transport

LDP Policy 53 - Impacts on traffic

PPW4 Chapter 03 - Making and Enforcing Planning Decisions

PPW4 Chapter 04 - Planning for Sustainability

PPW4 Chapter 05 - Conserving and Improving Natural Heritage and the

Coast

PPW4 Chapter 06 - Conserving the Historic Environment

PPW4 Chapter 07 - Supporting the Economy

PPW4 Chapter 08 - Transport

PPW4 Chapter 11 - Tourism, Sport and Recreation

PPW4 Chapter 12 - Infrastructure and Services

PPW4 Chapter 13 - Minimising and Managing Environmental Risks and

Pollution

SPG03 - Sustainable Design

SPG04 - Planning Obligations

SPG06 - Landscape Character Assessment Study, June 2009

### Item 6 - Report on Planning Applications

SPG10 - Parking

SPG12 - Coal Works - Instability

SPG13 - Archaeology

SPG14 - Renewable Energy

TAN 05 - Nature Conservation and Planning

TAN 06 - Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities

TAN 08 - Renewable Energy

TAN 11 - Noise

TAN 12 - Design

TAN 13 - Tourism

TAN 18 - Transport

TAN 22 - Planning for Sustainable Buildings

## Officer's Appraisal

### **Background**

This is a full major application for the change of use and conversion of a vacant private school to a fifteen bedroomed hotel with function rooms, at Netherwood School, Saundersfoot. The school is a Grade II listed building, and a Listed Building Consent application has also been submitted to the Authority for consideration (NP/12/0027).

Netherwood School is part of the Hean Castle Estate. The site is located to the north of Saundersfoot in the open countryside, on the southern side of the B4316 road. It is elevated above the level of the road, and the buildings and playing fields are surrounded by trees. It was originally constructed in circa 1840 as a private house with associated outbuildings. From 1946 it was used as a public school until its closure in 2009, since when it has been vacant. Vehicular access to the property lies to the north-western corner of the property, with a driveway leading to the area of hardstanding to the front (northern elevation) of the buildings. The house is constructed of white render walls under a slate roof, and has both two and single storey extensions on its western side and to the rear. A detached outbuilding lies to the south of the internal courtyard and tennis courts, which is constructed of coursed rubble stone under a slate roof. Modern school buildings lie to the south of the main house, including a detached sports hall, and a number of prefabricated classrooms and store buildings. To the south of the school buildings lie two areas of grass meadows, which run gently downhill towards the south. Beyond the hardstanding to the front of the house, lies an area of woodland that runs down to the road.

#### Constraints

The site lies within the open countryside, and the historic buildings are Grade II listed. The whole site lies over a Coal Referral Area. The south-east edge of the site is bordered by a public right of way.

### Relevant Planning History

There have been a number of applications on the site regarding its use as a school.

The applicant also received pre-application advice from this Authority last year supporting the change of use of the school to a hotel, and its associated extensions and alterations.

### **Current Proposals**

This full application proposes the conversion of the vacant school buildings to a fifteen bedroomed hotel, and associated function rooms and facilities. The main house would be converted and extended to provide 3 bedrooms on its ground floor, along with the dining room, lounge, reception area, and kitchen, with a further six bedrooms on the first floor. The existing staircase would be replaced with one leading from the reception area. A new link to the existing sports hall would allow the change of use of this building as a function room, with associated toilet and kitchen facilities. The stone outbuilding to the west of the site would be converted into another six bedrooms, and linked to the main house and its extensions on the first floor. A new sun terrace would be provided leading out from the dining room and function room, with the existing prefab classrooms being demolished to allow for the provision of a lawned garden area to the south of the building.

Beyond the western outbuilding would be a car park laid out with 63 car parking spaces which would be in addition to the 18 spaces provided to the north of the building. A gravelled access track would run around the southern area of the garden to provide service delivery access for the function room. Beyond the new car park to its western boundary a new boiler / storage building (measuring approximately 23m x 6m x 5.5m) would be erected, constructed of vertical larch timber cladding under a slate roof. This building would also provide a bat roost for the site.

It is anticipated that the use of the hotel and its associated facilities would provide three full-time jobs and five part-time jobs. The hotel's function rooms could be used independently from the hotel, and would provide a venue for business and social functions.

The application has been supported with the following information:-

- A Transport statement;
- A Design and Access Statement;
- A Schedule of alterations to the Listed Building;
- An Ecological Survey;

- A Coal Mining Risk Assessment Report;
- An Arboricultural Report;
- A Demolition Statement.

### Key Issues

This application raises the following planning matters:-

- Impact of the proposal on the special qualities of the National Park;
- Impact of the proposal on the Listed Building;
- Provision of new tourism accommodation:
- Community facility provision;
- Employment provision;
- Highways and public rights of way matters;
- · Coal mining stability issues;
- Protected habitat and species matters;
- Archaeology matters;
- Sustainability matters;
- Trees and landscaping matters;
- Drainage and the water environment;
- Amenity.

Impact on the Special Qualities of the National Park and the Listed Building. The proposal has been the subject of extensive pre-application discussions with support being given to the principle of the change of use and the proposed alterations and extensions to the Listed Building.

The proposal involves the removal of the school's prefabricated classrooms which are predominantly located to the rear of the main building, and modern extensions to the building. This improves the setting of the Listed Building by allowing an area of grass and garden to be provided, thereby providing a more sensitive and appropriate setting for the Listed Building, plus it removes insensitive additions and extensions. The removal of the modern buildings and extensions on the site is therefore considered to be an enhancement to the site in terms of its visual improvement to the setting of the Listed Building and the special qualities of the National Park.

The change of use of the school includes extensions to the Listed Building, including the linking of the main building to the existing stone outbuilding and the sports hall. The Conservation Officer has raised no objection to the proposal as regards its impact on the Listed Building. He considers the proposed alterations and extensions to be of benefit to the Listed Building (including the removal of existing modern alterations and extensions), considerate and respectful to the character and appearance of the building, and bringing the buildings back into a viable use. As a result the proposal is not considered to harm the architectural and historic merit of the Listed Building or the special qualities of the National Park.

The proposal also involves the provision of a new boiler / store building and a new car park. The proposed store building is designed to replicate an agricultural store, using traditional materials (timber and slate), and is of a size and scale that does not detract from the setting of the Listed Building or the special qualities of the National Park. The car park would be screened from wider views by the proposed and existing buildings and the provision of a new hedgebank to the south. The car park would not be lit, and to ensure that light pollution is not a problem with the development, a condition has been suggested as regards external lighting. Likewise details of the car park's surfacing can be controlled within the suggested landscaping conditions. As a result the proposal is not felt to harm the special qualities of the National Park or the setting of the Listed Building.

### Provision of New Hotel and Community Facilities.

Policy 7 of Local Development Plan sets out the types of development that can be acceptable in countryside locations. The Authority's Policy Section consider that the change of use and conversion of the buildings on the site to a hotel is acceptable under this policy, and that the site can be accessed by public transport. Although the proposal will result in the loss of school use (and which would be classed as a community use) it is considered that with regard to the provision of the function suite for non-residents as a community facility that this offers provision of leisure facilities for the needs of the wider community. This is pertinent to Policy 48 of the Local Development Plan as regards the provision of new community facilities for the community, which should be accessible by public transport and local services. The view of the Policy Section is that the site is accessible by public transport. In conclusion their view is that the proposal is compliant with development plan policy, and as a result no objection is raised to the change of use of the site.

#### Employment Provision.

Policy 1 of the Local Development Plan requires the protection of the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park, with due regard to be paid to the need to foster the economic and social well-being of its local communities. The school has been closed for several years, and its change of use to a hotel would result in the employment of three full-time employees and five part-time. This is considered to be of a positive benefit of the local community and the National Park.

## Highways and Public Rights of Way Matters.

The application was forwarded to Pembrokeshire County Council's Highway Section for its comments as regards access and parking arrangements. It is considered that the proposed change of use of use is acceptable, and that the existing access is sufficient to accommodate this use. It is also satisfied that although the proposal would generate a significant increase in traffic, particularly due to the function use of the facility, that the provision of the new car park was satisfactory, subject to conditions, concerning provision and retention. However a requirement for the provision of £10,000 for the provision of a footpath / shared use path linking Saundersfoot Railway Station to Saundersfoot is requested.. The applicant has agreed to the provision of this amount, which has to be provided through a S106 Legal Agreement.

As regards the impact of the proposal on the public rights of way on and near the site, concern has been raised by the Authority's Rights of Way Section that the proposed discharge of drainage will cross the footpath and render it muddy and waterlogged. As a result it is suggested that this is conditioned so as not to occur.

### Coal Mining Stability Issues.

The application was submitted with a Coal Mining Risk Assessment Report as the site lies over a Coal Referral Area. The Coal Authority has raised no objection, and standard advice has been attached as an informative.

### Protected Habitat and Species Matters.

The application was supported with a Protected Species report which found that bats are roosting in a number of buildings on the site. The applicant is aware that before any work can begin on the buildings that a bat development licence from the Welsh Government will be needed. It is proposed to retain the bat roosts in the main house and one of its western outbuildings, plus make the new boiler house / store suitable as a further roost. At the request of CCW revised drawings have been provided annotated with the bat mitigation measures, and both the National Park's Ecologist and CCW have screened that the proposal will not have a Significant Effect on the internationally important habitat of the Pembrokeshire Bat Sites and Bosherton Lakes SAC.

### Archaeological Matters.

The Dyfed Archaeological Trust has advised that the site is a relatively intact Grade II Listed Building. As a result it would like to protect potential archaeological remains on the site and have suggested that a conditional requirement for a programme of archaeological work is undertaken. The application was not supported with a pre-development archaeological assessment, but they have agreed to undertaking an assessment in accordance with the requirements of the Trust. As a result this condition has been suggested.

## Sustainability Matters, Including Demolition.

Both national government and the Local Development Plan place a strong emphasis on sustainable development. The proposal has sought to balance improving the energy efficiency of the Listed Building whilst retaining its architectural and historic merits, through measures such as insulating the roof, replacing the existing heating system, and fitting low energy light bulbs. Low and zero carbon energy sources such as bio mass and solar heating (both active and passive), have also been incorporated into the scheme.

The application has also been supported with a Demolition Statement, which concludes that the majority of demolition waste generated by the development will be either reused or recycled. The applicant has agreed to the provision of a Site Waste Management Plan to minimise demolition, and this plus operational details of the demolition, have been conditioned.

### Trees and Landscaping Matters.

The site lies within the open countryside and there are a number of trees within and adjacent to the site. After negotiations with the Authority's Landscape Officer, the applicant has agreed to provide protection for those trees that can be retained on site, and this has been conditioned. Generic landscaping conditions have also been suggested which would control both hard and soft landscaping. This is considered necessary so as to protect the setting of the Listed Building and the special qualities of the National Park.

# Drainage and the Water Environment.

The site is currently served by a filter bed treatment system, located on the edge of woodland at the southern edge of the site. The application proposes a package treatment plant, the details of which it would like agreed with the Environment Agency at the detailed design stage of the works. Neither Welsh Water or the Environment Agency have objected to the proposal, subject to the latter requesting observance of their standard advice. Informatives have been suggested concerning the observance of the Environment Agency's standard advice.

### Amenity.

The school has been vacant for some time now, and its change of use to a hotel with associated function rooms would result in an intensification of the use of the site. Although it is located in the open countryside, at some distance from neighbouring residential properties (over 90 metres away), the change of use could result in amenity issues, such as hours of use and delivery, noise and light pollution. At the time of writing this report no response had been received from the County Council's Environmental Health Section. The applicant has not provided details of hours of opening, saying that at this time they are unknown. In light of this and the absence of any comment from Environmental Health, conditions have been suggested concerning lighting and refuse arrangements. It is felt that these measures would be sufficient to protect the amenity of the neighbouring area and special qualities of the National Park.

### Conclusion

The proposal is considered to bring back into use a vacant Listed Building, bring employment to the area, and provide a facility of community benefit. Subject to the conditions suggested in the report above, the proposal is not felt to harm the special historic and architectural qualities of the Listed Building, nor harm the special qualities of the National Park. The application is recommended for permission subject to the suggested conditions and the satisfactory negotiation of a S106 Legal Agreement in respect of securing a commuted sum for highway improvements.

## **Recommendation**

That the application be delegated to the Chief Executive, Director of Park Direction and Planning / Head of Development Management to grant planning permission for this development subject to:-

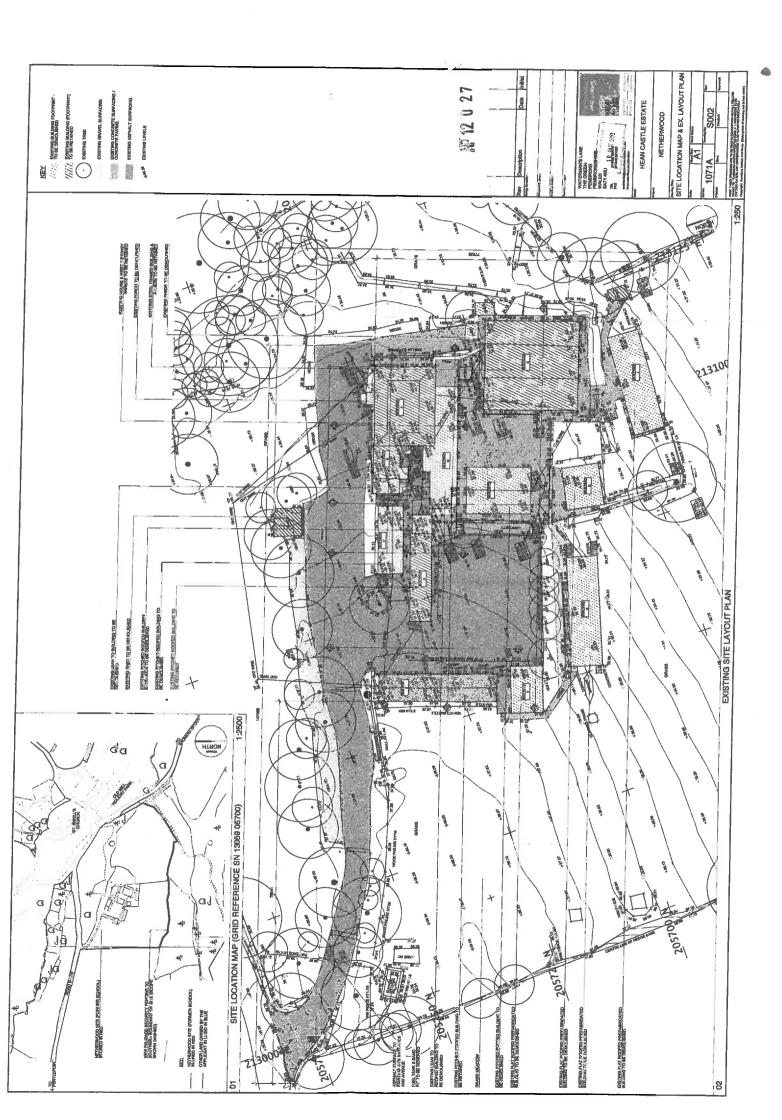
- the satisfactory completion of a Section 106 Legal Agreement for the required highways funding; and
- · appropriate conditions.

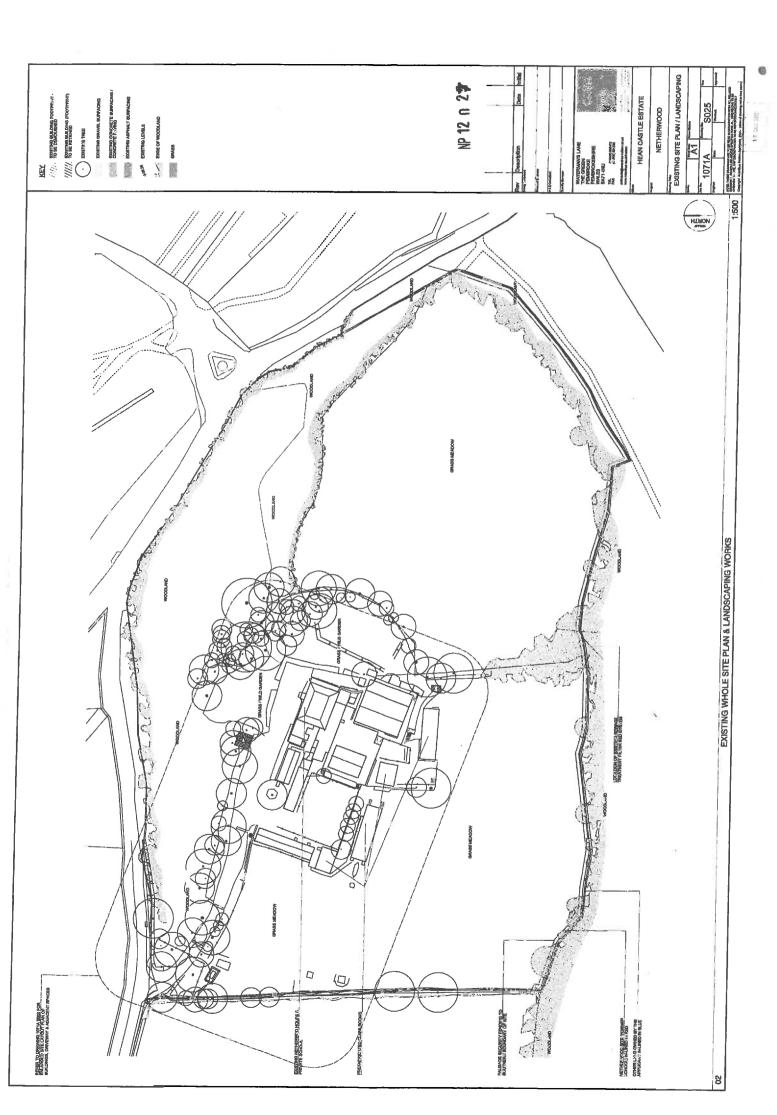
The suggested conditions at the time of writing the report are as follows:-

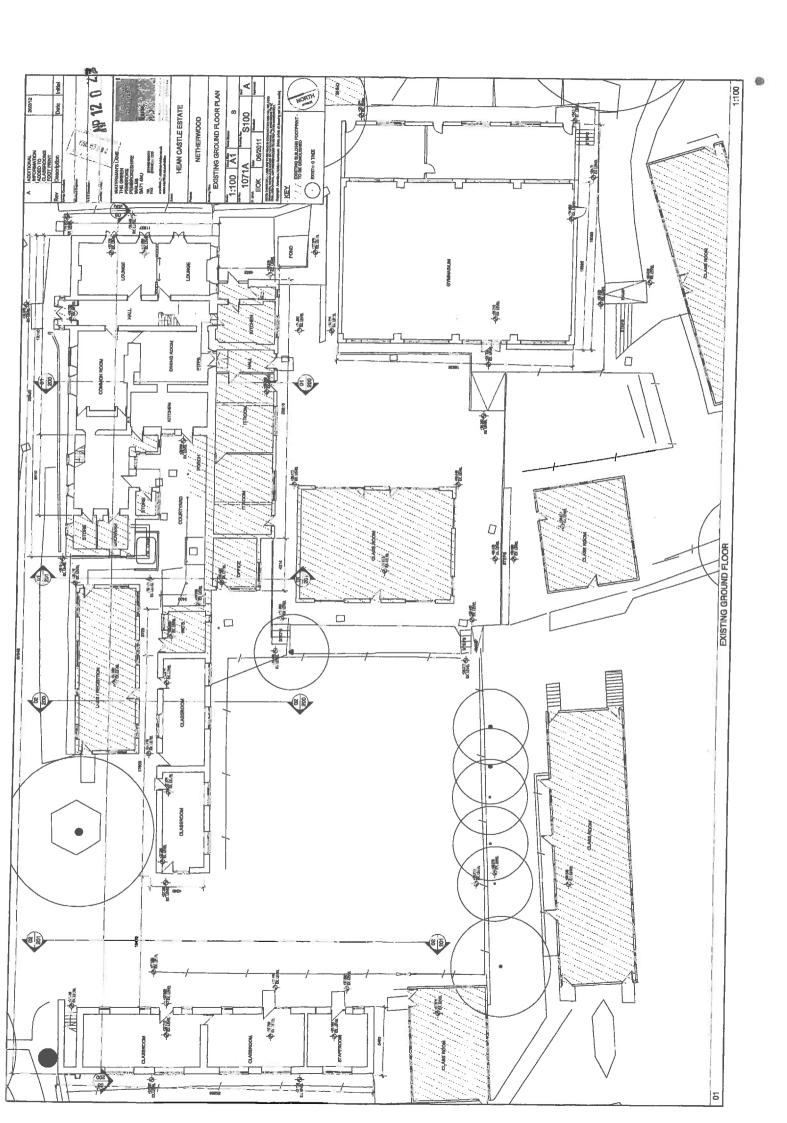
- Standard time;
- Deposited plans;
- Materials (sample submissions);
- Render sample panel;
- Roof materials:
- Parking and turning areas;
- · Retention and use of parking areas;
- Hard and soft landscaping;
- Planting schedule;
- Tree protection;
- Demolition statement;
- External lighting;
- SUDS;
- Archaeological assessment;
- Refuse arrangements.
- Control of the use of the Building

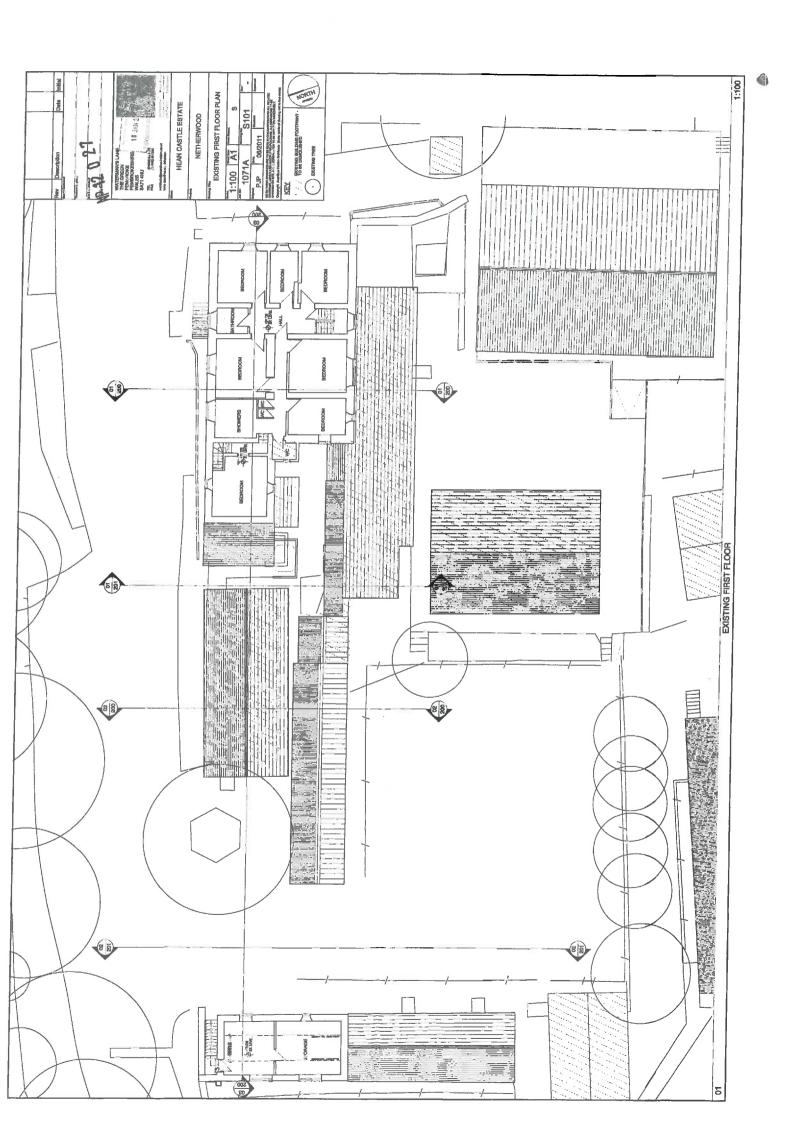
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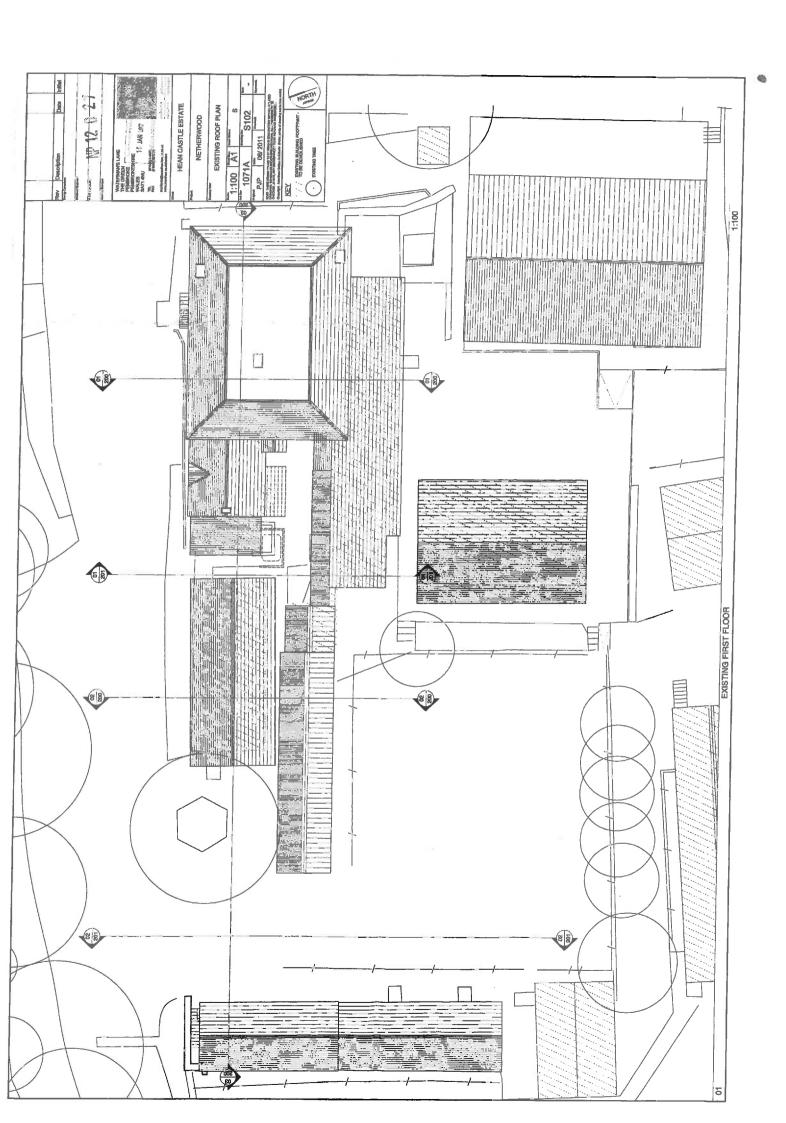
- Protected species;
- Environment Agency Standard Advice;
- Archaeology requirements; and
- Coal Authority requirements.

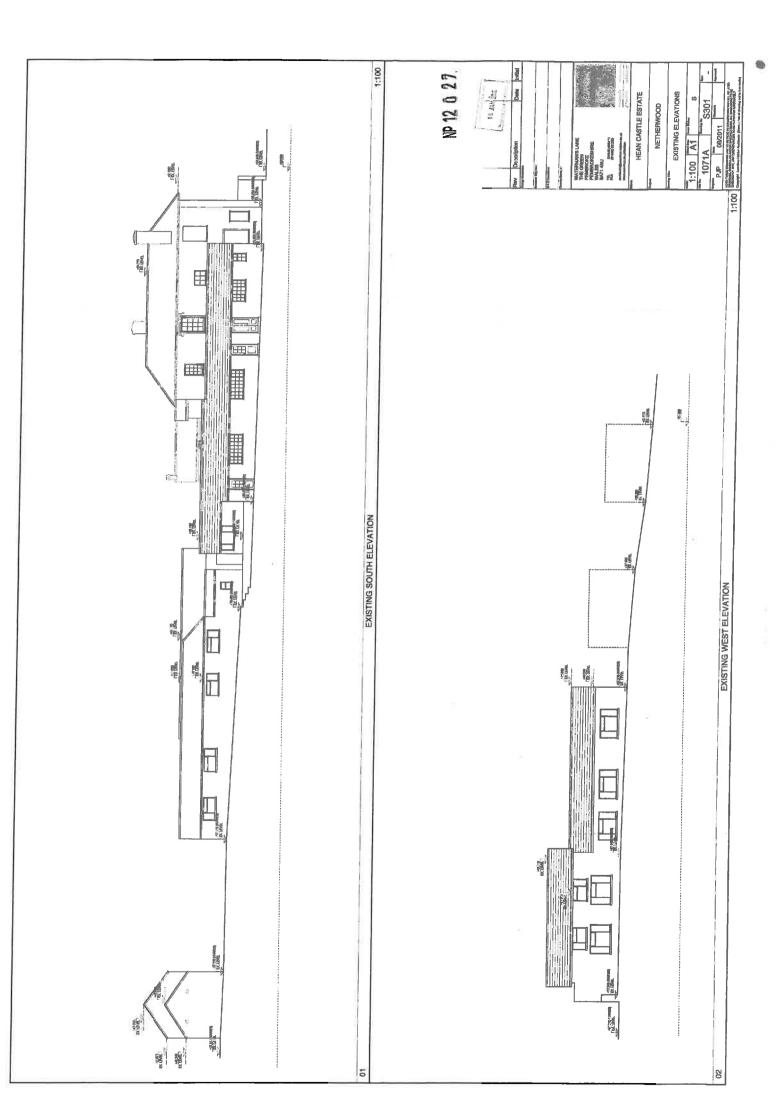


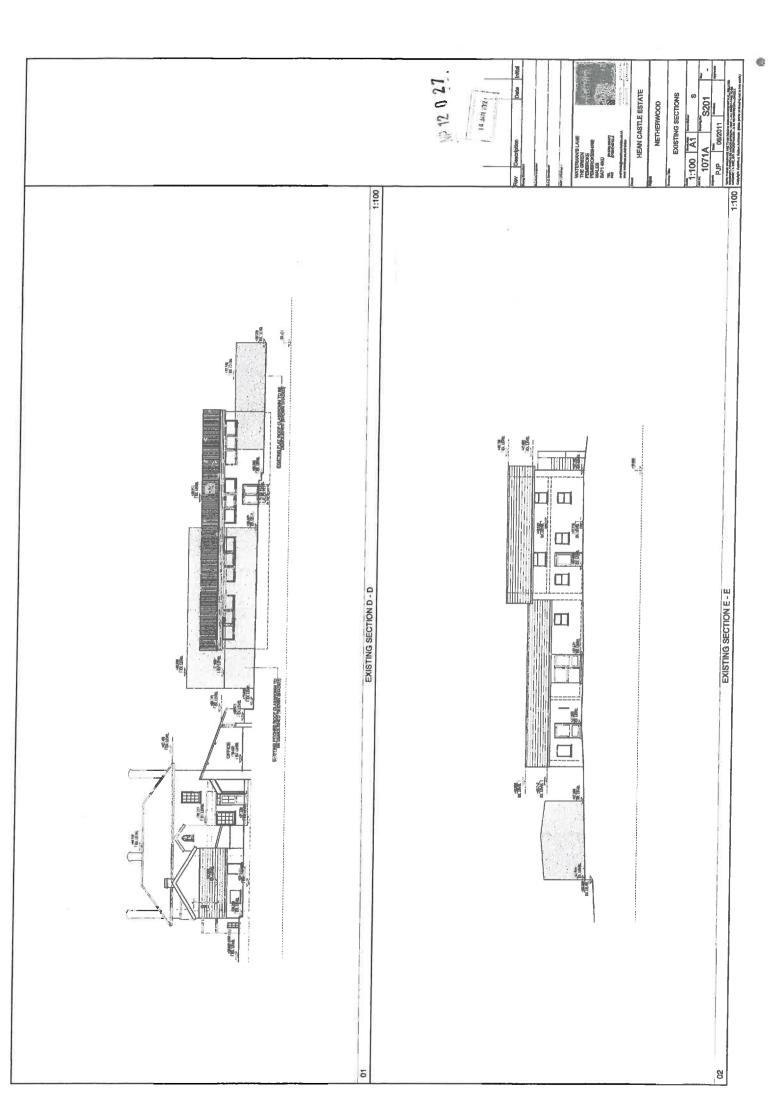


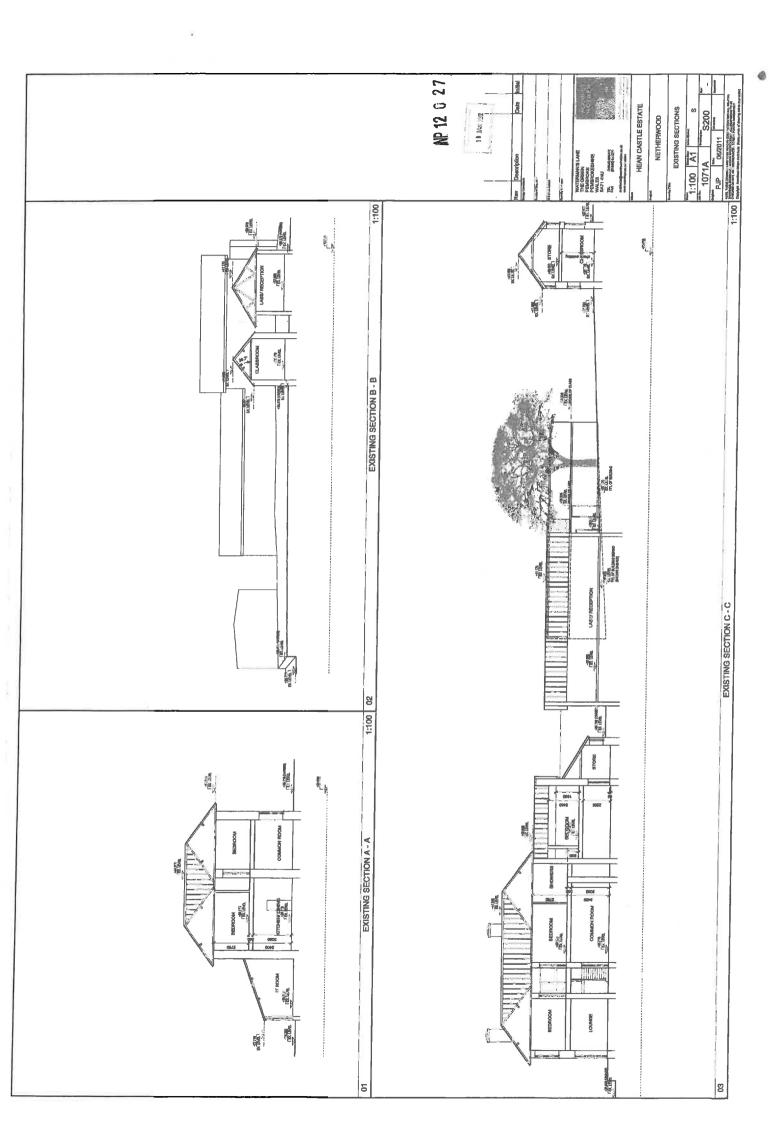


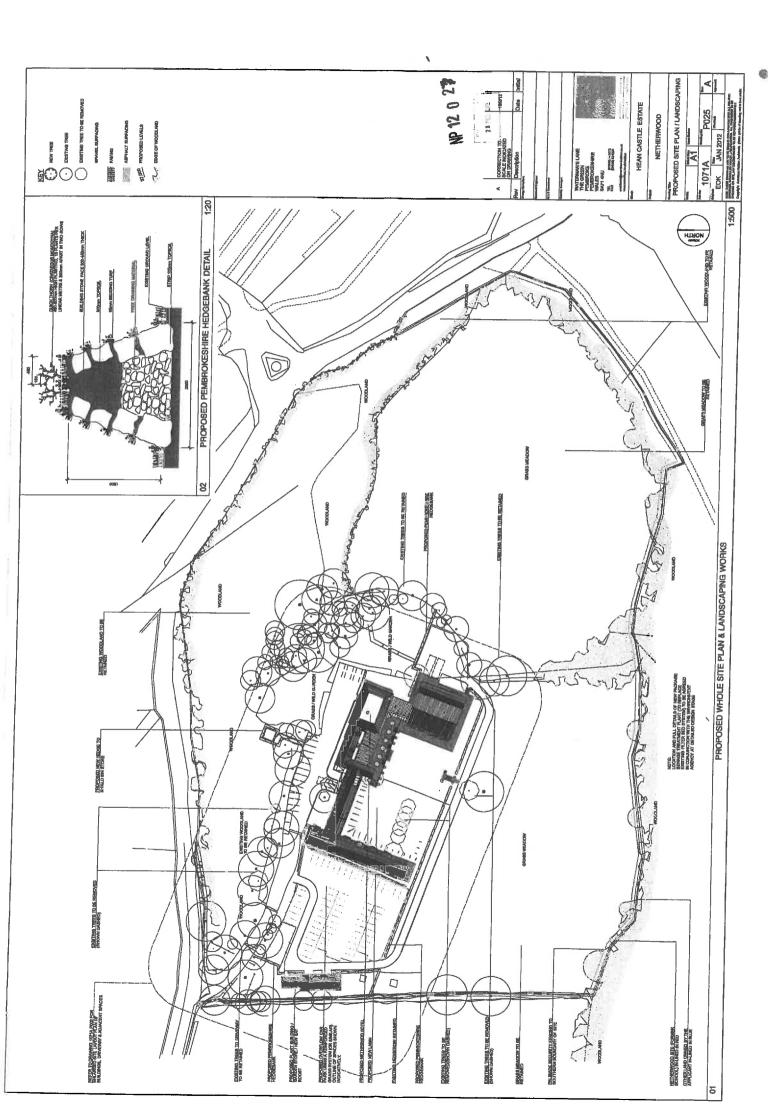


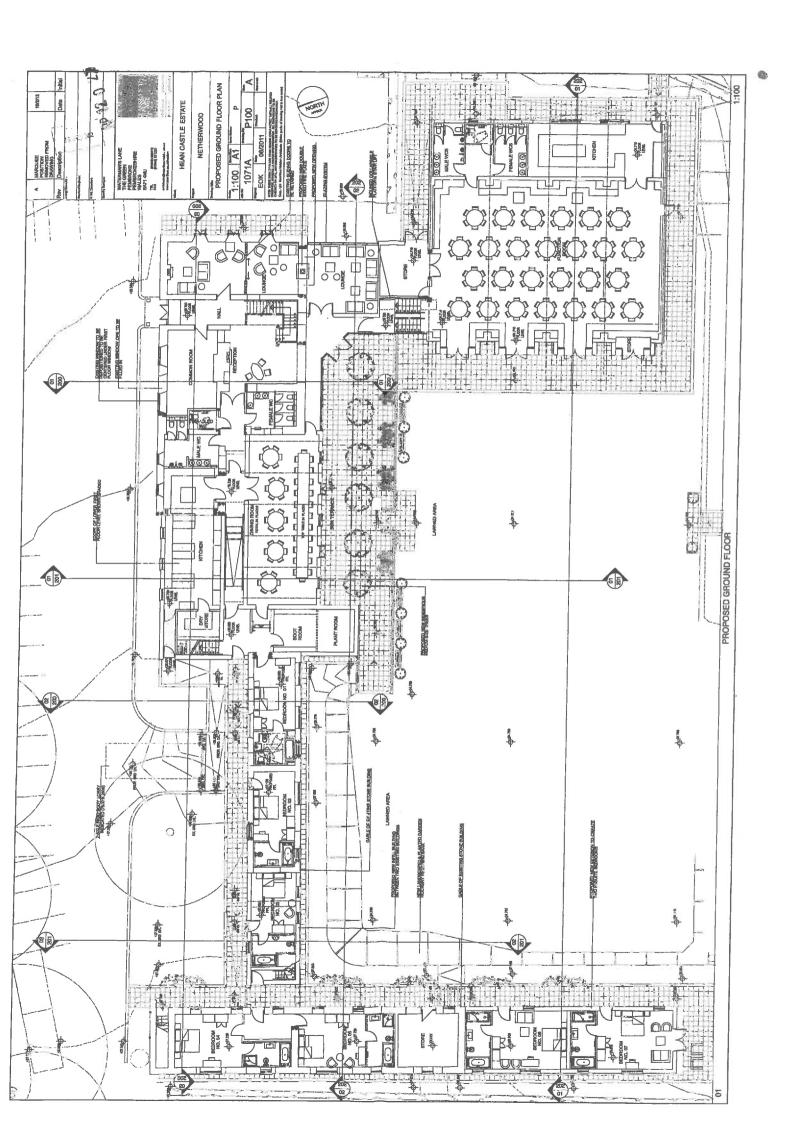


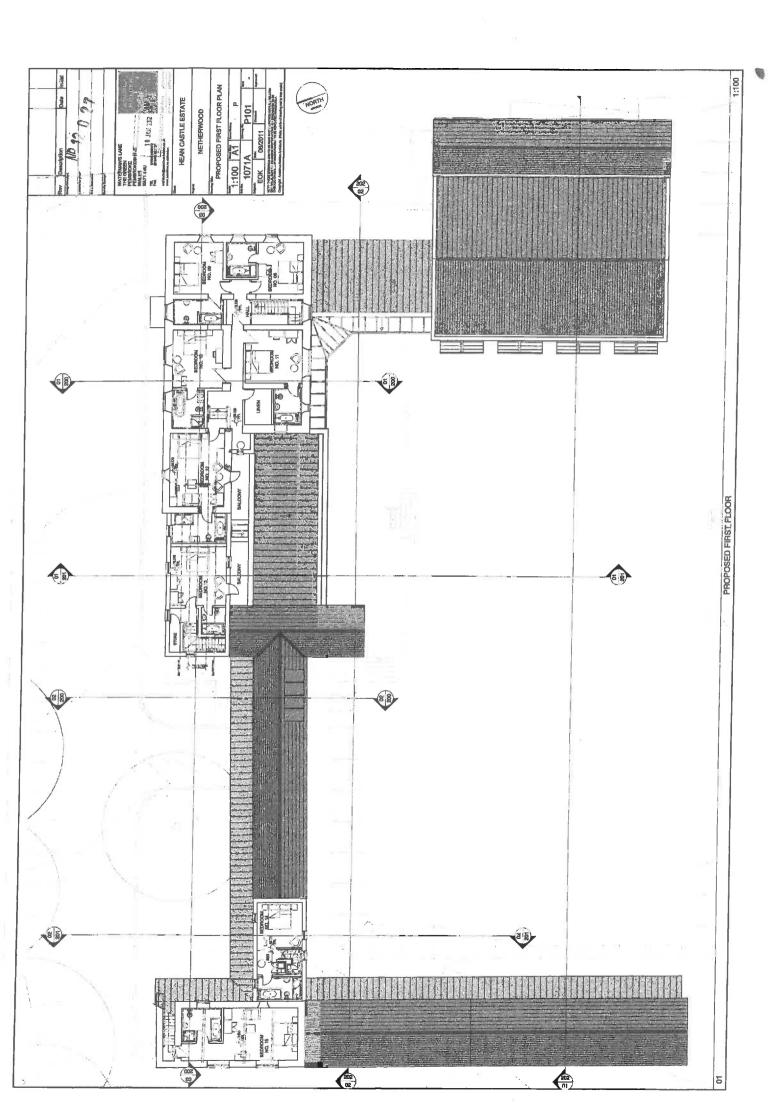


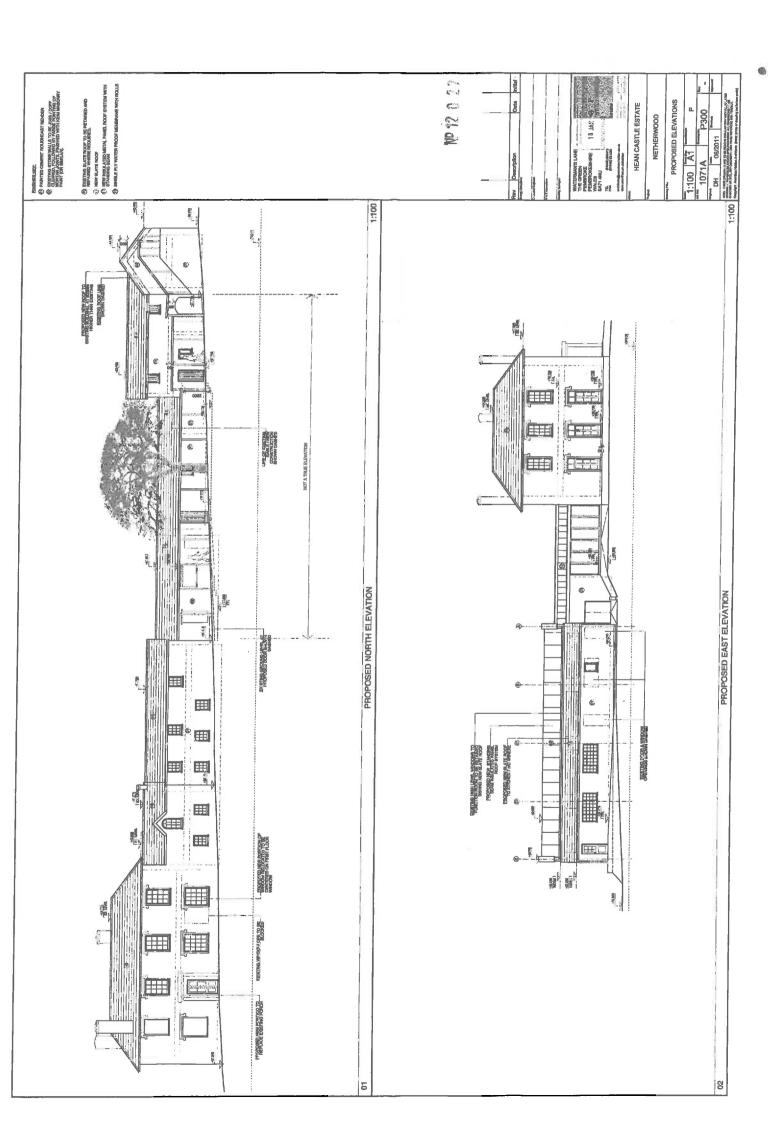


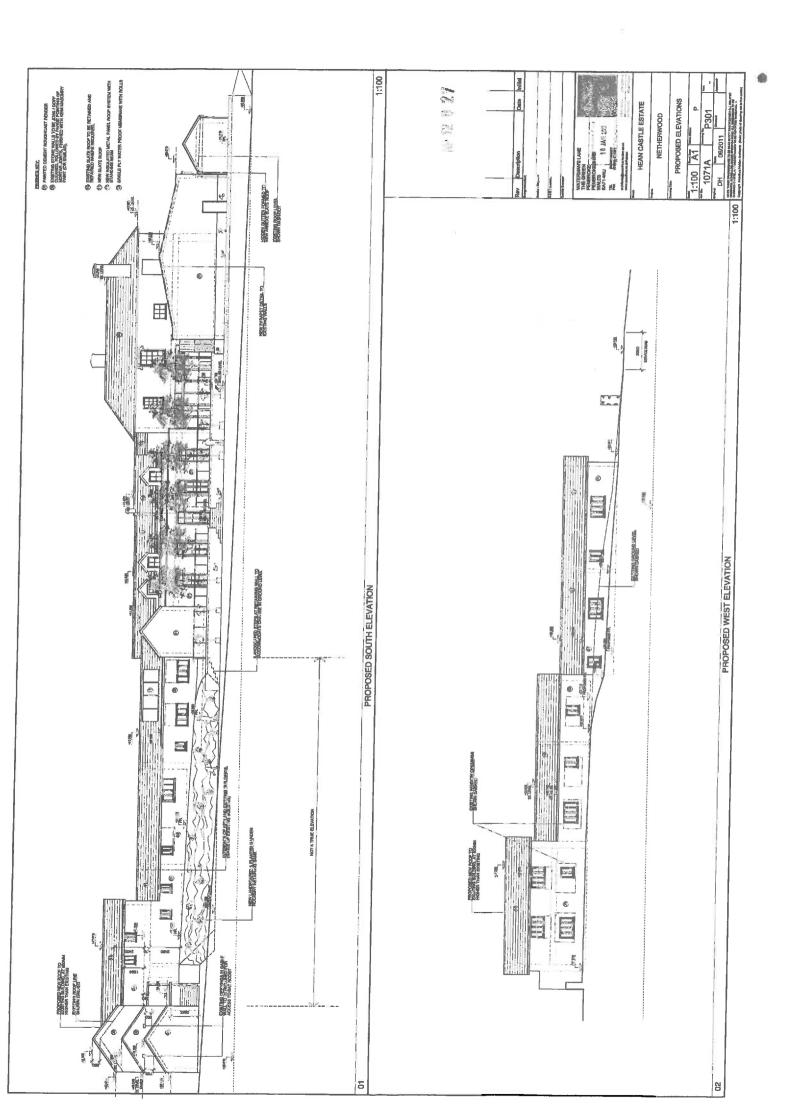












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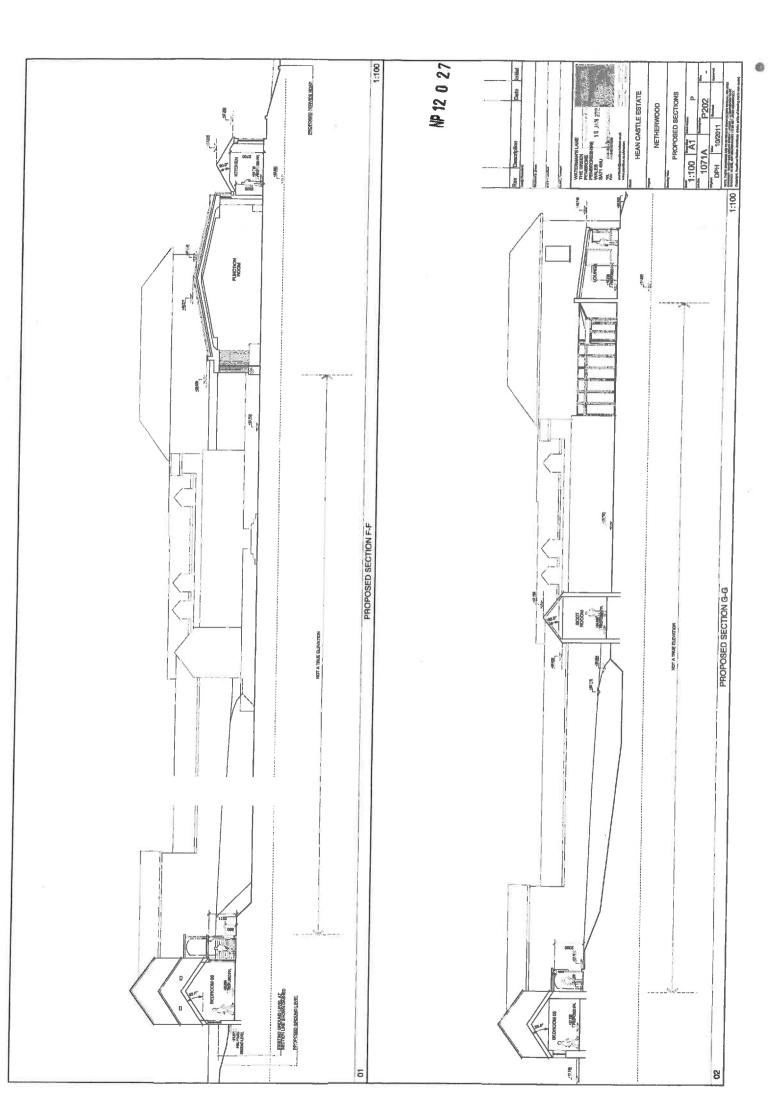
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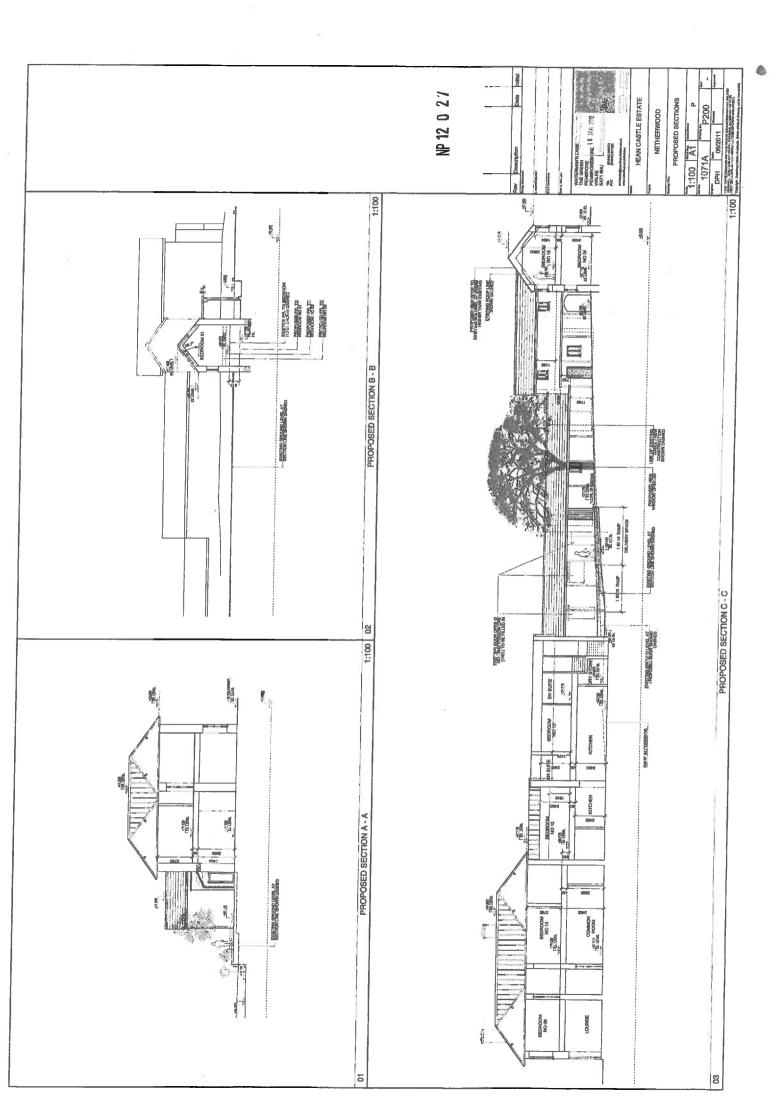
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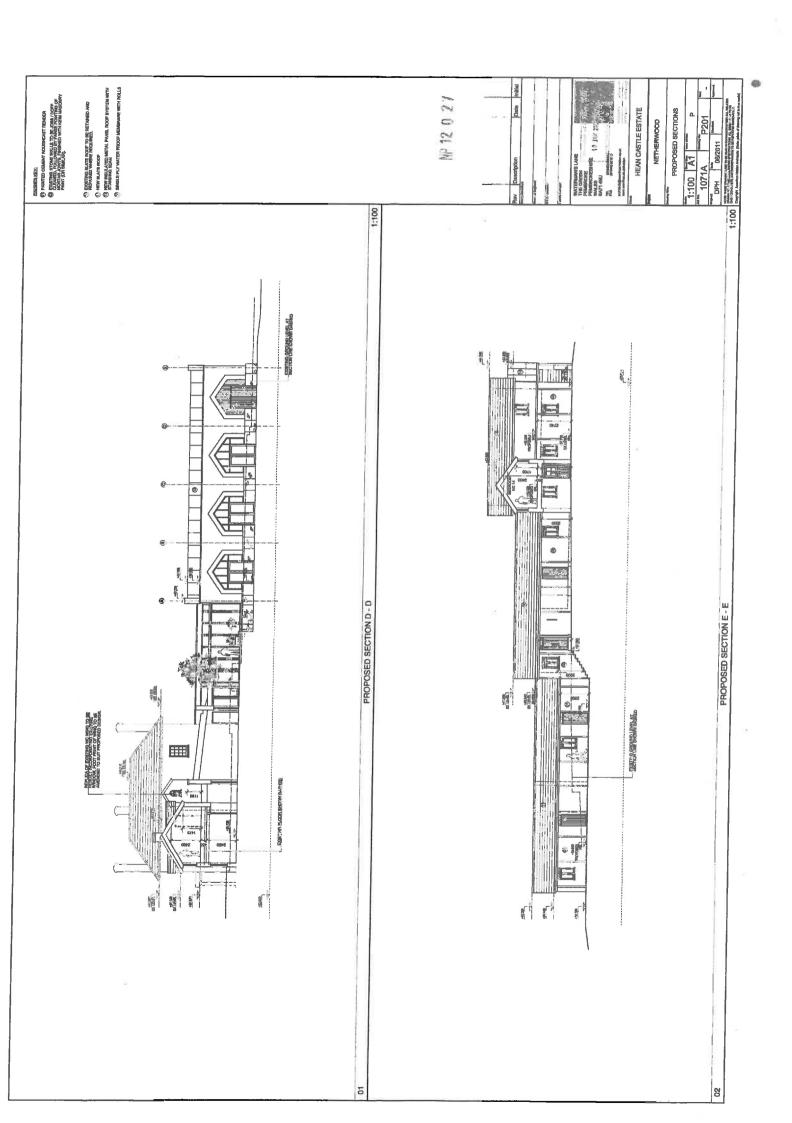
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