

<b>Application Number</b>	11/0697/FUL	<b>Agenda Item</b>	
<b>Date Received</b>	4th July 2011	<b>Officer</b>	Miss Amy Lack
<b>Target Date</b>	29th August 2011		
<b>Ward</b>	Trumpington		
<b>Site</b>	3 Aberdeen Square Cambridge Cambridgeshire CB2 8BZ		
<b>Proposal</b>	Addition of photovoltaic solar thermal panels on roof.		
<b>Applicant</b>	Mr. Bruce Stuart 3 Aberdeen Square Cambridge Cambridgeshire CB2 8BZ		

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## **1.0 SITE DESCRIPTION/AREA CONTEXT**

- 1.1 3 Aberdeen Square, located within the Accordia development is a mid-terrace, four storey town house, fronting onto the green space of Aberdeen Square to the north. To the east is Aberdeen Avenue, to the west Gilpin Place. The building is in the final stages of construction, much of the residential surrounding the application site has been recently completed and the majority of it is occupied.
- 1.2 The building is not listed and the site does not fall with a City of Cambridge Conservation Area.

## **2.0 THE PROPOSAL**

- 2.1 This application proposes the installation of one solar thermal panel, and four photovoltaic panels to the flat roof of the building. These have been arranged with two smaller photovoltaic panels either side of the solar thermal panel to the eastern side of the roof, and two photovoltaic panel occupying the western half of the roof.
- 2.2 The solar thermal panel, positioned central to the eastern side of the roof area will measure 2 metres in width, 1.8 metres in length and rise approximately 0.5 metres above the height of

the parapet of the flat roof when installed and angled at 15 degrees from the level roof.

- 2.3 The photovoltaic panel to the northeast of the roof measures 1.5 metres in length and 1.95 metres in width. Its highest edge will project 0.5 metres above the parapet roof.
- 2.4 The photovoltaic panel to the southeast of the roof measures 2.9 metres in length and 1.95 metres in width. Its highest edge will project 0.5 metres above the parapet roof.
- 2.5 The photovoltaic panels to the western side of the roof measure 2.9 metres in length and 1.95 metres in width. Its highest edge will project 0.7 metres above the parapet roof.
- 2.6 The application is accompanied by the following supporting information:
1. Elevational plans and roof plan;
  2. Photographs of similar installations;
  3. Manufacturer's quote.
- 2.7 This application has come to Planning Committee for determination because the applicant is a member of the Council.

### **3.0 SITE HISTORY**

- 3.1 Planning history within the Accordia development:

<b>Reference</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
C/00/1175/OP	Outline application for residential development and offices	A/C
C/02/0999/RM	Reserved matters submission for 378 dwellings	A/C
06/0527/REM	Variation of reserved matters planning permission C/02/0999/REM to include internal reconfiguration of the apartments in Block FCB03 to form 4 additional units, plus 4 additional car parking spaces in the basement car parking, and	A/C

06/0524/REM	other minor alterations. Variation of reserved matters planning permission C/02/0999/REM to include internal reconfiguration of the apartments in Block FCB05 and ABA03 to form 8 additional units, and other minor alterations.	A/C
07/0826/FUL	Creation of eight additional parking spaces off Kingfisher Way	Refused

#### 4.0 PUBLICITY

4.1	Advertisement:	No
	Adjoining Owners:	Yes
	Site Notice Displayed:	No
	Public Meeting/Exhibition (meeting of):	No
	DC Forum (meeting of):	No

#### 5.0 POLICY

##### 5.1 Central Government Advice

5.2 **Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development (2005):** Paragraphs 7 and 8 state that national policies and regional and local development plans (regional spatial strategies and local development frameworks) provide the framework for planning for sustainable development and for development to be managed effectively. This plan-led system, and the certainty and predictability it aims to provide, is central to planning and plays the key role in integrating sustainable development objectives. Where the development plan contains relevant policies, applications for planning permission should be determined in line with the plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

5.3 **Planning Policy Statement 22: Renewable Energy (2004):** Provides policy advice to promote and encourage the development of renewable energy sources. Local planning authorities should recognise the full range of renewable energy sources, their differing characteristics, location requirements

and the potential for exploiting them subject to appropriate environmental safeguards.

5.4 **Circular 11/95 – The Use of Conditions in Planning Permissions:** Advises that conditions should be necessary, relevant to planning, relevant to the development permitted, enforceable, precise and reasonable in all other respects.

5.5 **East of England Plan 2008**

SS1: Achieving Sustainable Development

ENV7: Quality in the Built Environment

5.6 **Cambridge Local Plan 2006**

3/1 Sustainable development

3/4 Responding to context

3/7 Creating successful places

3/14 Extending buildings

8/17 Renewable energy

5.7 **Supplementary Planning Documents**

**Cambridge City Council (May 2007) – Sustainable Design and Construction:** Sets out essential and recommended design considerations of relevance to sustainable design and construction. Applicants for major developments are required to submit a sustainability checklist along with a corresponding sustainability statement that should set out information indicated in the checklist. Essential design considerations relate directly to specific policies in the Cambridge Local Plan 2006. Recommended considerations are ones that the council would like to see in major developments. Essential design considerations are urban design, transport, movement and accessibility, sustainable drainage (urban extensions), energy, recycling and waste facilities, biodiversity and pollution. Recommended design considerations are climate change adaptation, water, materials and construction waste and historic environment.

## 5.8 Central Government Guidance

### Draft National Planning Policy Framework (July 2011)

- 5.9 The National Planning Policy Framework (Draft NPPF) sets out the Government's economic, environmental and social planning policies for England. These policies articulate the Government's vision of sustainable development, which should be interpreted and applied locally to meet local aspirations.

The Draft NPPF includes a set of core land use planning principles that should underpin both plan making and development management (precised form):

1. planning should be genuinely plan-led
2. planning should proactively drive and support the development and the default answer to development proposals should be 'yes', except where this would compromise the key sustainable development principles set out in the Draft NPPF
3. planning decisions should take into account local circumstances and market signals such as land prices, commercial rents and housing affordability and set out a clear strategy for allocating sufficient land which is suitable for development in their area, taking account of the needs of the residential and business community
4. planning decisions for future use of land should take account of its environmental quality or potential quality regardless of its previous or existing use
5. planning decisions should seek to protect and enhance environmental and heritage assets and allocations of land for development should prefer land of lesser environmental value
6. mixed use developments that create more vibrant places, and encourage multiple benefits from the use of land should be promoted
7. the reuse of existing resources, such as through the conversion of existing buildings, and the use of renewable resources should be encouraged
8. planning decisions should actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest use of public transport, walking

and cycling, and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable

9. planning decisions should take account of and support local strategies to improve health and wellbeing for all
10. planning decisions should always seek to secure a good standard of amenity for existing and future occupants of land and buildings.

The Draft NPPF states that the primary objective of development management is to foster the delivery of sustainable development, not to hinder or prevent development.

## **6.0 CONSULTATIONS**

### **Cambridgeshire County Council (Engineering)**

- 6.1 No comment.

#### **Head of Environmental Services**

- 6.2 Supportive of proposals to provide sustainable energy therefore are no adverse comments on this application.
- 6.3 The above responses are a summary of the comments that have been received. Full details of the consultation responses can be inspected on the application file.

## **8.0 ASSESSMENT**

- 8.1 From the consultation responses and from my inspection of the site and the surroundings, I consider that the main issues are:
  1. Context of site, design and external spaces
  2. Renewable energy and sustainability
  3. Residential Amenity

#### **Context of site, design and external spaces**

- 8.2 The key design issue relates to the impact of the photovoltaic and solar thermal panels upon the character and appearance of the building and surrounding area.

- 8.3 The proposed panels will be visible from ground level (where they part project above the parapet), most clearly from the end of Aberdeen Avenue, to the northeast corner of Aberdeen Square. They will also be visible from Kingfisher Way at the point where this street travels alongside the northwest corner of Aberdeen Square, and to a lesser extent, but nonetheless visible, along Gilpin Place to the southwest of 3 Aberdeen Square.
- 8.4 The installation of this partially visible plant on the roofscape of these buildings within the Accordia scheme does have the potential to impact upon the clean and crisp lines of the upper floors of the development. However, the fact that the panels are visible does not mean that this is unduly harmful to the extent that would warrant refusal of the application. Other dwellings have already installed similar plant to their roofs. It is also likely that over time, as the larger Accordia site is completed and becomes fully occupied, paraphernalia associated with residential occupation will modify some aspects of the original character of the development. This is not necessarily harmful and is a natural part of the evolution of a development as it matures over time.
- 8.5 The high quality of the development and the vision for its original design should be maintained as far as practicably possible. The longer views afforded by the open space across to the building where the panels are sited does afford greater visibility of them and the breaking of the parapet roofline that results.
- 8.6 To try and overcome these concerns the applicant has worked to revise the layout of the proposed panels from what was proposed when originally submitted. This has resulted in four smaller photovoltaic panels as opposed to two larger panels and in turn this has reduced the height of the top edge of the panels and their visibility from the ground. Previously, as proposed, the larger single panels would have projected above the parapet on the eastern half of the roof by 0.9 metres. On the western half the single longer panel would have risen about 1.2 metres above the parapet. Revisions have meant that now, none of the panels, on either side of the roof will project more than 0.7 metres above the parapet.

- 8.7 The site does not fall within a conservation area and the building or the wider development is not listed. I also acknowledge that there are other examples of installations to the roofs of a number of units within the Accordia development. On balance, although I remain a little concerned about the potential discordant note that the visible parts of the panels might strike in longer distance views when seen against the clean lines of the parapet roof, I am of opinion that the visual impact is not so severe as to justify refusal of the development. The proposal is therefore considered compliant with East of England Plan (2008) policy ENV7 and Cambridge Local Plan (2006) policies 3/4, 3/7 and 3/14.

### **Renewable energy and sustainability**

- 8.8 The proposal is for the installation of photovoltaic and thermal solar panels to provide energy and hot water is a renewable energy scheme which the City Council seeks to encourage. As the proposal will not have a harmful impact upon the local environment or amenity (which has been addressed above) the benefits of the proposal are to be welcomed. As such, the proposal is considered compliant with East of England Plan (2008) EN Cambridge Local Plan (2006) policy 8/16 and the Sustainable Design and Construction SPD 2007.

### **Residential Amenity**

- 8.9 The proposed panels will be visible from the external terrace area of no.2 Aberdeen Square, the adjoining neighbour immediately to the east. The closest panel, to the west of this neighbour's amenity area is also likely to result in some overshadowing of this space. However, the lightweight frame upon which the panels are to be installed will mean that this panel will only have a slight impact. It will not overshadow or enclose this space to an unacceptable degree to the extent that it would result in any significantly harm to the residential amenity of adjoining neighbours. In my opinion the proposal adequately respects the residential amenity of its neighbours and the constraints of the site and is therefore compliant with East of England Plan (2008) policy ENV7 and Cambridge Local Plan (2006) policies 3/4 and 3/7.

## **9.0 CONCLUSION**

- 9.1 The installation of photovoltaic and thermal solar panels to provide energy and hot water should be encouraged and I accept that micro generation of energy is likely to become more commonplace and accepted as part of a normal streetscape. I am of the view that the proposal is unlikely to have a significant adverse impact upon the street scene or the wider Accordia Site. I recommend the application be approved.

## **10.0 RECOMMENDATION**

### **Approve subject to the following conditions:**

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: In accordance with the requirements of section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

### **Reasons for Approval**

1. This development has been approved, conditionally, because subject to those requirements it is considered to conform to the Development Plan as a whole, particularly the following policies:

East of England plan 2008: SS1 and ENV7

Cambridge Local Plan (2006): 3/1, 3/4, 3/7, 3/14 and 8/17

2. The decision has been made having had regard to all other material planning considerations, none of which was considered to have been of such significance as to justify doing other than grant planning permission.

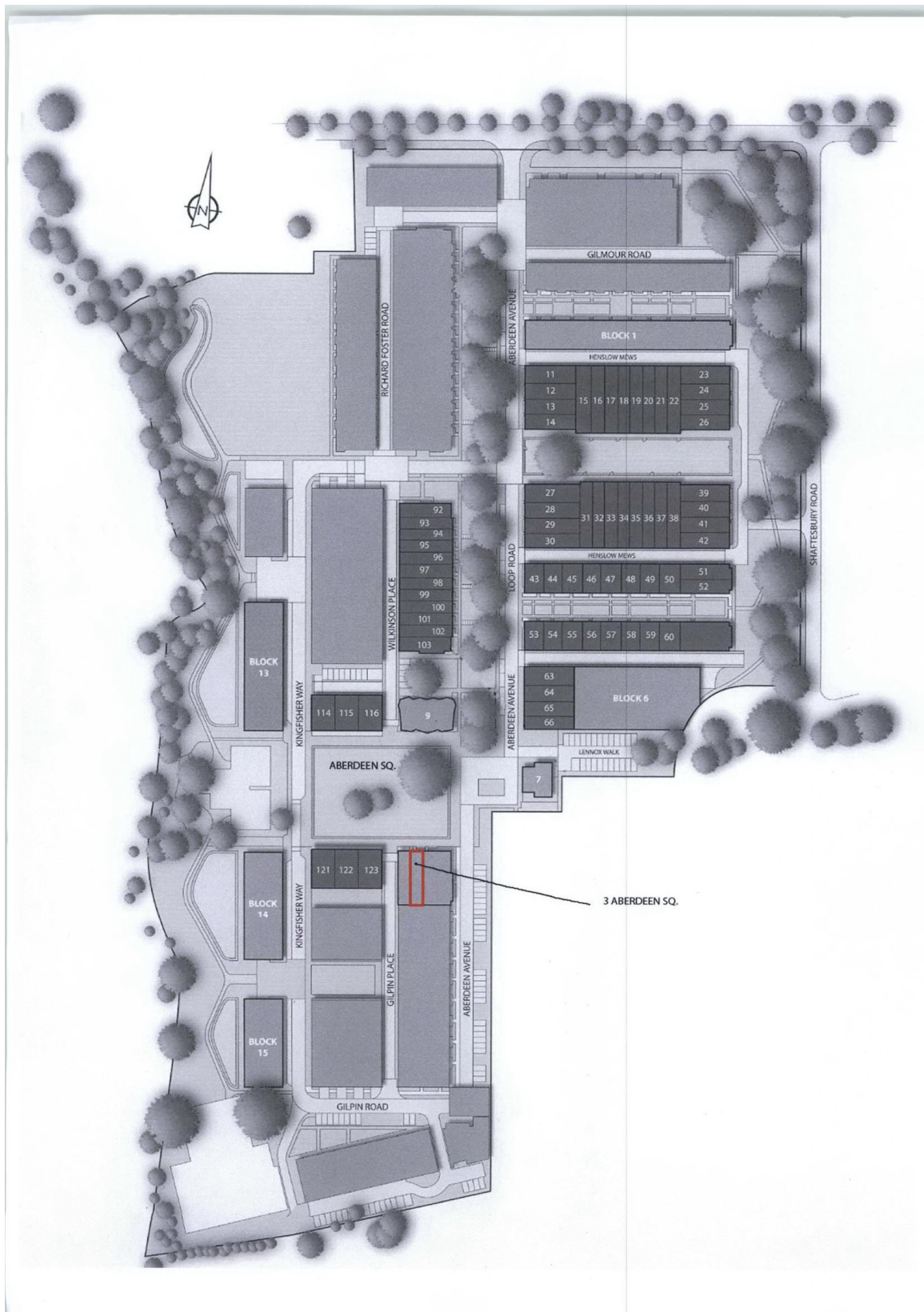
These reasons for approval can be a summary of the reasons for grant of planning permission only. For further details on the decision please see the officer report online at [www.cambridge.gov.uk/planningpublicaccess](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/planningpublicaccess) or visit our Customer Service Centre, Mandela House, 4 Regent Street, Cambridge, CB2 1BY between 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday.

## **LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985**

Under Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972, the following are “background papers” for each report on a planning application:

1. The planning application and plans;
2. Any explanatory or accompanying letter or document from the applicant;
3. Comments of Council departments on the application;
4. Comments or representations by third parties on the application as referred to in the report plus any additional comments received before the meeting at which the application is considered; unless (in each case) the document discloses “exempt or confidential information”
5. Any Structure Plan, Local Plan or Council Policy Document referred to in individual reports.

These papers may be inspected by contacting John Summers (Ext.7103) in the Planning Department.



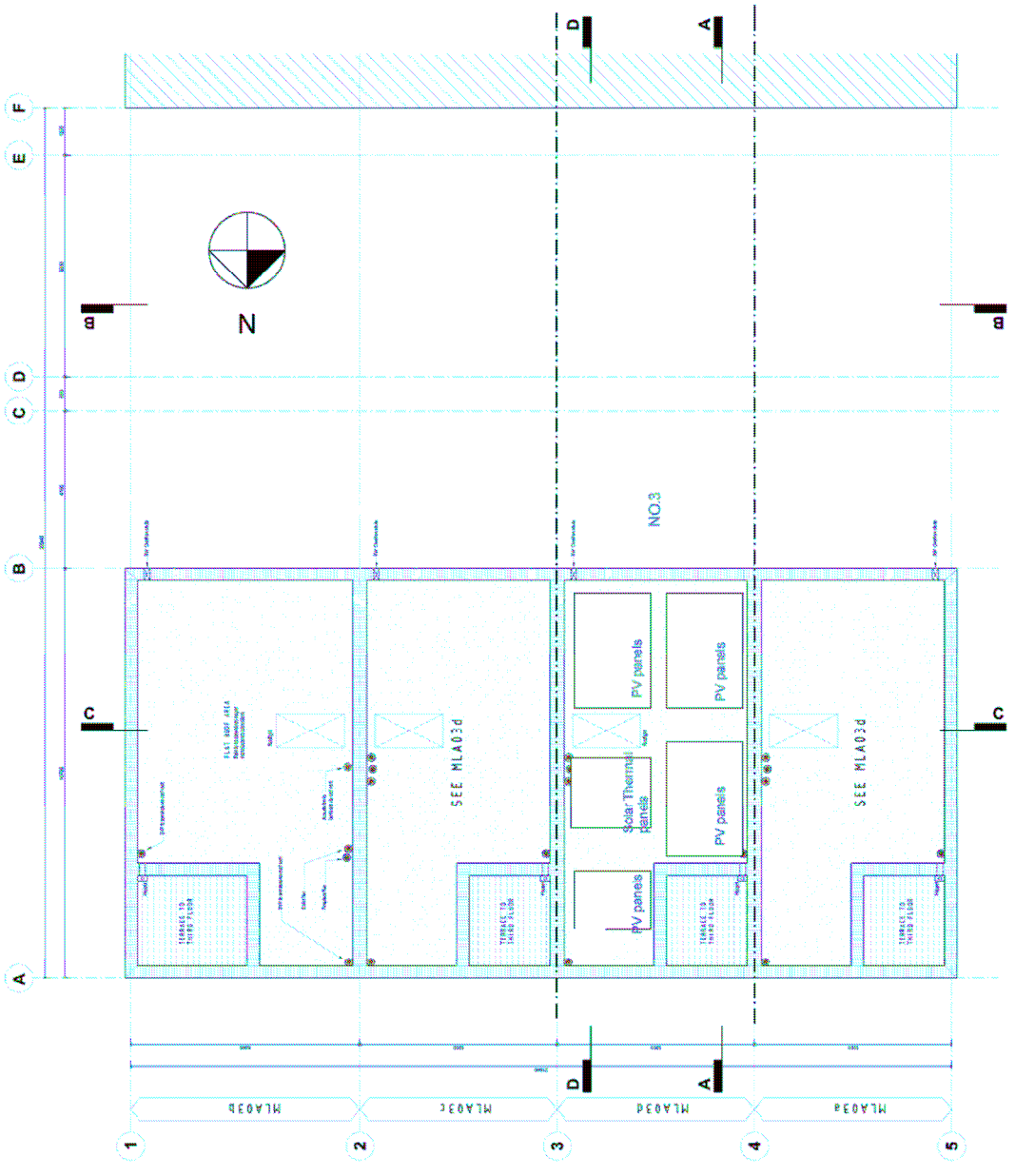
3 ABERDEEN SQ.

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**PROPOSED SOLAR PANELS**  
**3 ABERDEEN SQ.**  
**CAMBRIDGE**

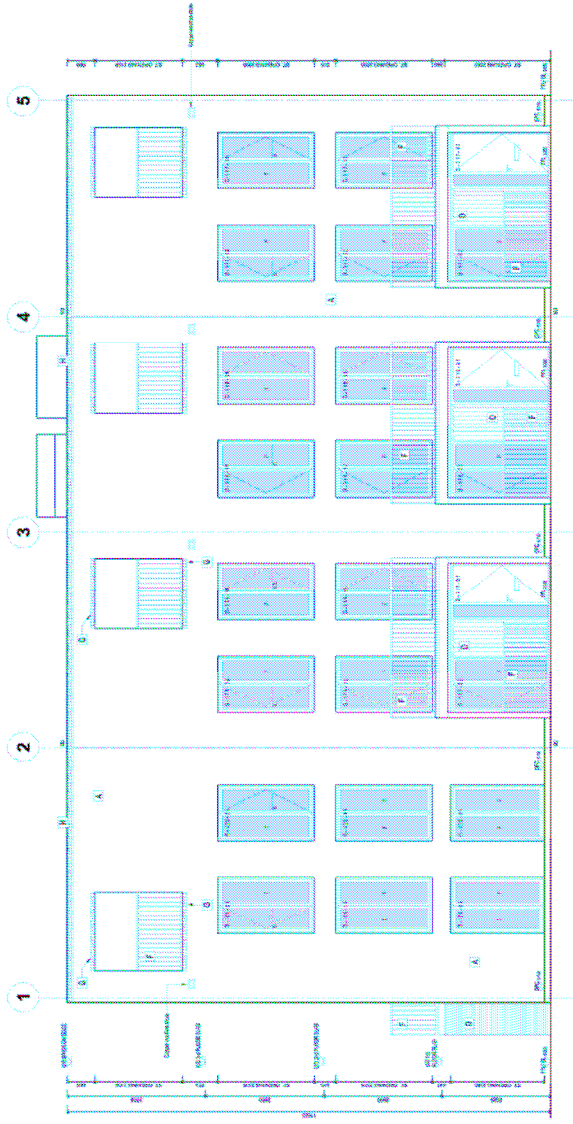
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ABERDEEN SQUARE

<p><b>BRUCE STUART ARCHITECTS</b>          Pemberton Terrace Cambridge CB21JA tel 01223 576916          e mail brucestuart@mc.com          mob 07713742127</p>	<p><b>PROPOSED SOLAR PANELS</b>  <b>3 ABERDEEN SQ.</b>  <b>CAMBRIDGE</b></p>	<p><b>PROPOSED NORTH</b>  <b>ELEVATION</b></p>	<p>Sheet          Drawing Scale          1:100          @ A3          Date JUNE 2011          Drawing No.  <b>11-1279</b>  <b>01.2 B</b></p>
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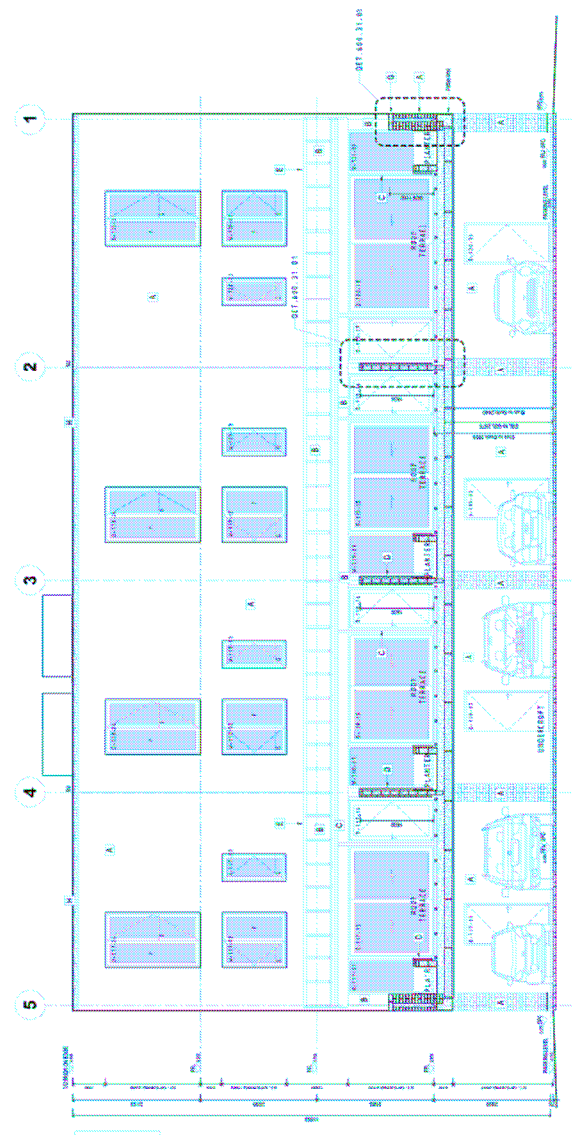


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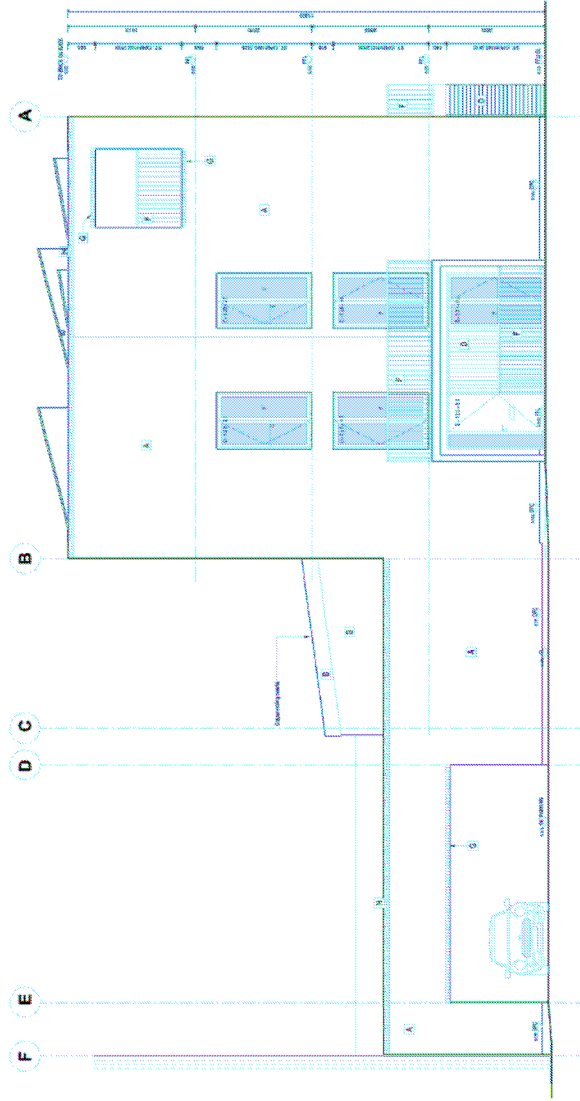
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<b>BRUCE STUART ARCHITECTS</b> 1Fenberton Terrace Cambridge CB21JA t:01223 576916 m:07713742127 e:mail brucestuart@bsac.com	<b>PROPOSED SOLAR PANELS</b> <b>3 ABERDEEN SQ.</b> <b>CAMBRIDGE</b>	<b>PROPOSED EAST</b> <b>ELEVATION</b>	Drawing No. <b>11-1279</b> Drawing No. <b>01.4 B</b> Date <b>JUNE 2011</b> Drawing Scale <b>1:100</b>
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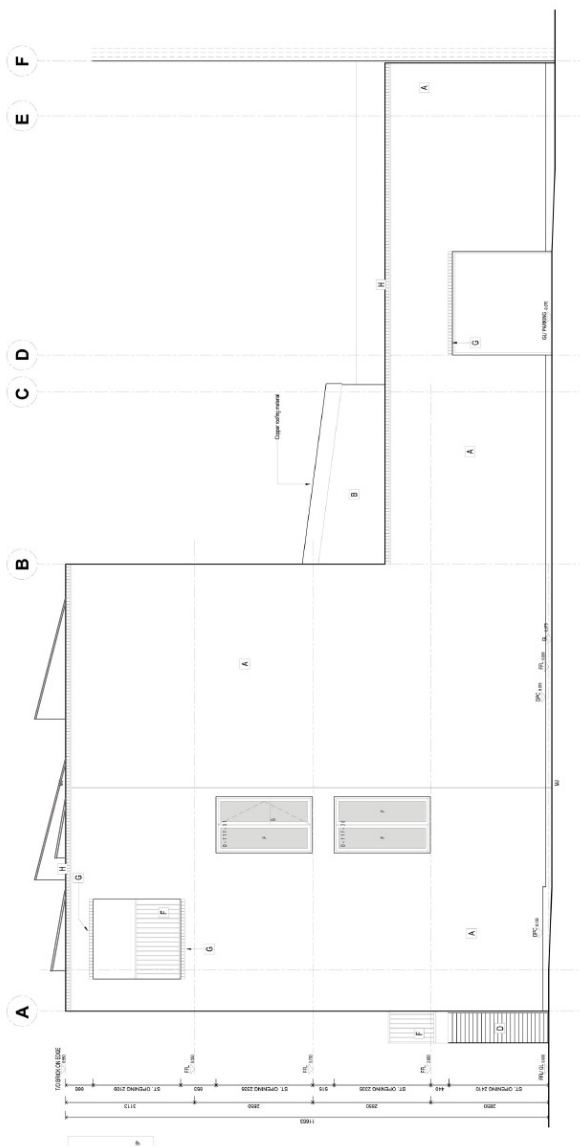


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PROPOSED SOLAR PANELS  
 3 ABERDEEN SQ.  
 CAMBRIDGE

PROPOSED WEST  
 ELEVATION

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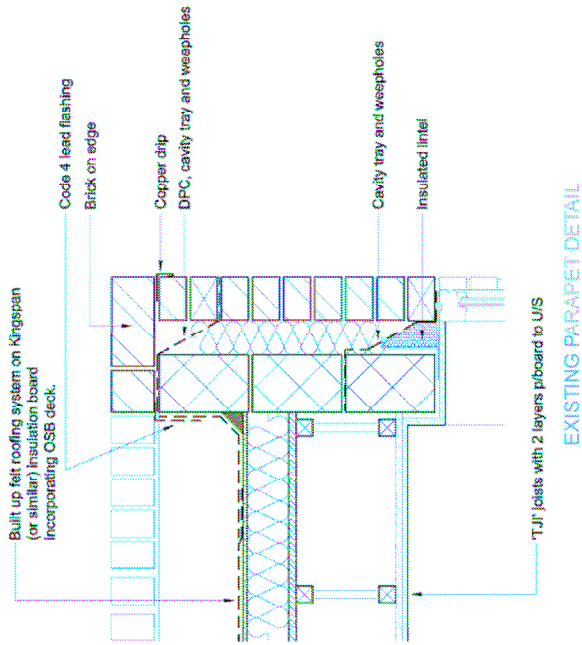


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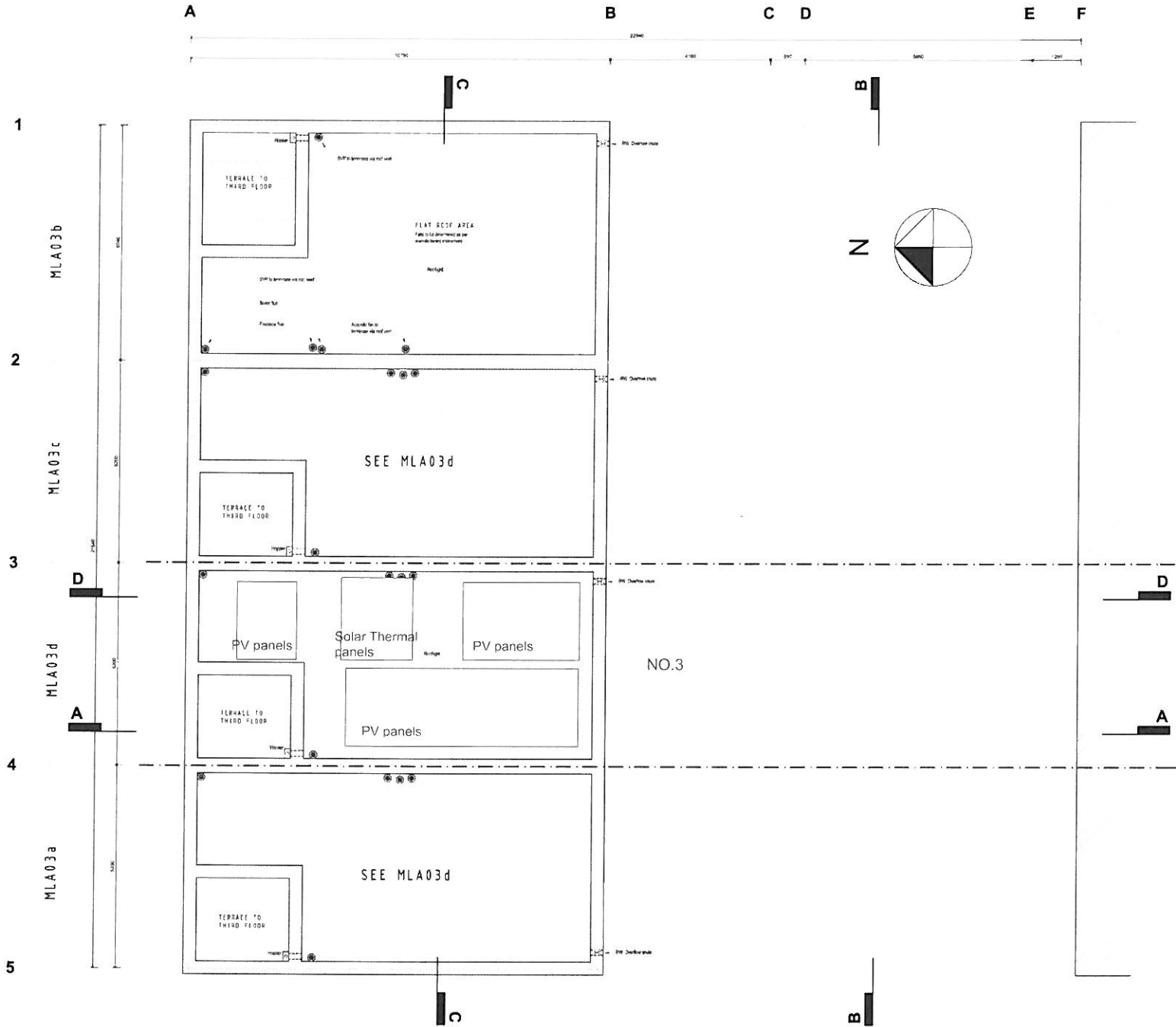
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CAMBRIDGE

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ABERDEEN SQUARE



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**PROPOSED SOLAR PANELS**  
**3 ABERDEEN SQ.**  
**CAMBRIDGE**

**PROPOSED ROOF PLAN**

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**PROPOSED SOLAR PANELS**  
**3 ABERDEEN SQ.**  
**CAMBRIDGE**

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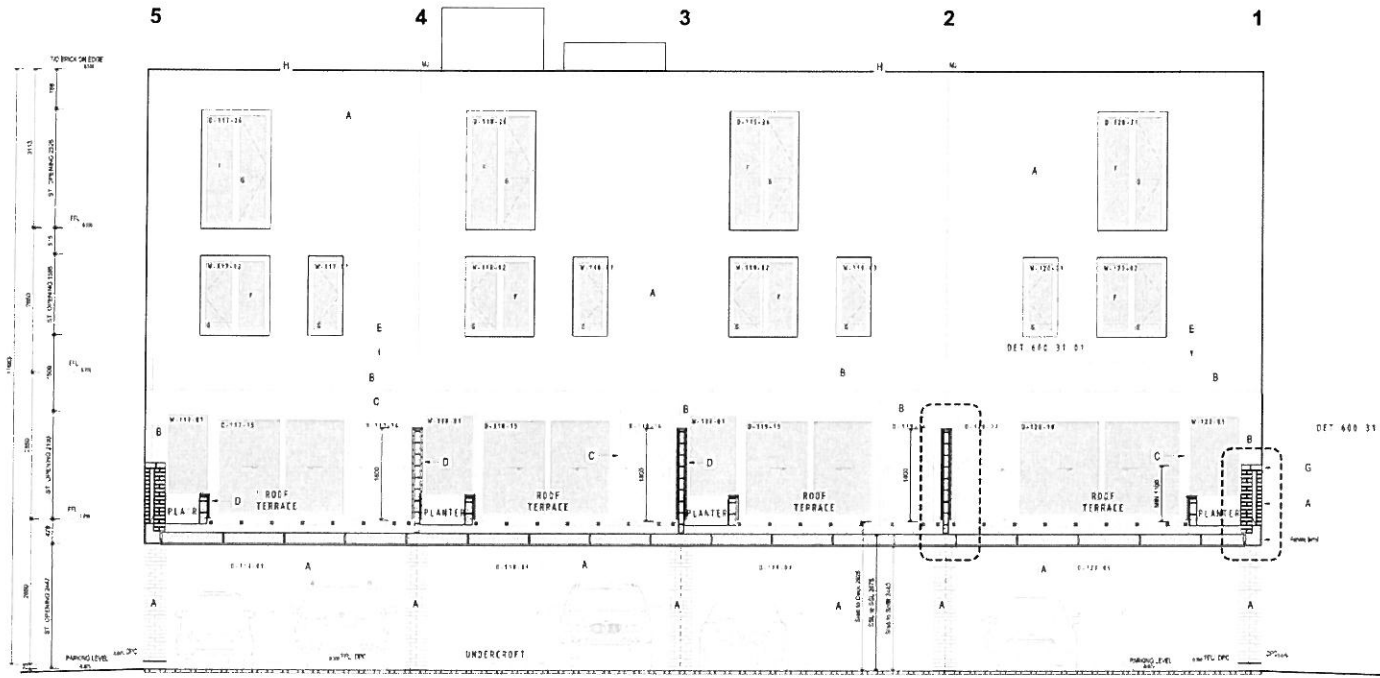
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**PROPOSED SOLAR PANELS**  
**3 ABERDEEN SQ.**  
**CAMBRIDGE**

**PROPOSED SOUTH ELEVATION**

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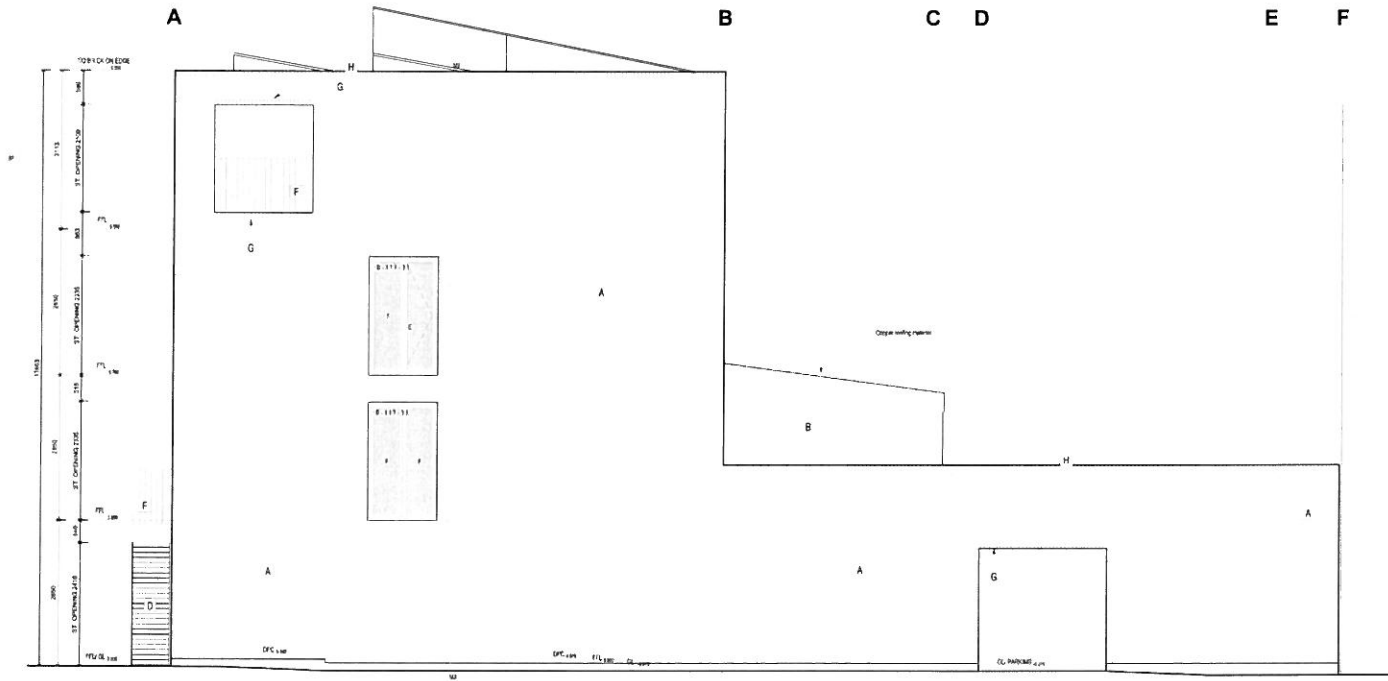
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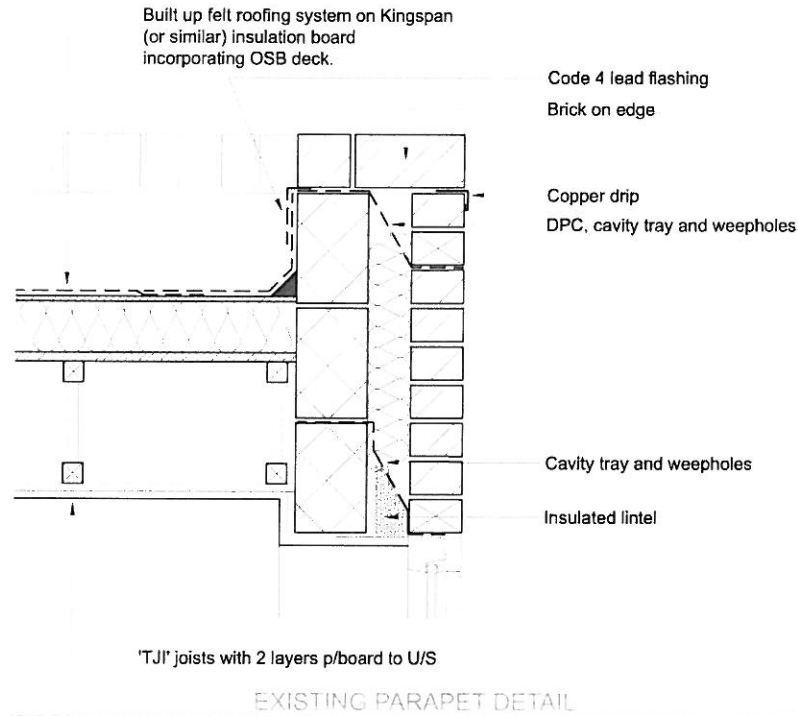
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Project

**PROPOSED SOLAR PANELS**  
3 ABERDEEN SQ.  
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