

## Report for Resolution

**Report to** Planning Applications Committee  
**Date** 30 June 2011  
**Report of** Head of Planning Services  
**Subject** 11/00244/F Model Boat Club Pavilion Eaton Park South  
Park Avenue Norwich

Item  
**6 (1)**

### SUMMARY

<b>Description:</b>	New access gate to the boat pond (Eaton Park) from South Park Avenue and grass and plant protection matting to access way and provision of disabled parking area.
<b>Reason for consideration at Committee:</b>	Member's Request and Objections
<b>Recommendation:</b>	Approve
<b>Ward:</b>	Eaton
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Mr Lee Cook Senior Planner 01603 212536
<b>Valid Date:</b>	25th March 2011
<b>Applicant:</b>	Mr Richard Thurston
<b>Agent:</b>	Mr Richard Thurston

### INTRODUCTION

#### The Site

##### Location and Context

1. The application site is located within Eaton Park, a designated Historic Park, sited to the north of South Park Avenue. Pedestrian pathways and access points are located around the Park and main vehicle access and parking is located on the east and west side of the central Park area. The nearest residential properties to the site are some 115+ metres away to the south-east on South Park Avenue
2. The application site is to the south of the central pavilion buildings at the Park and to the west of the boating pond.
3. The park is one five listed Sandys Winch parks and the most important park for recreation out of these. Facilities not only include the boating lake but also a bowling green, sports pitches, and originally 29 lawn tennis courts located within this section of the park and 20 hard surface courts located to the south. In more recent years a cycle speedway track and a skateboard park have also been provided, continuing the park's importance in terms of providing a recreational resource for the whole city, not just the local area.

## Constraints

4. The park is designated as publicly accessible recreational open space (policy SR3) and as a historic park (policy SR8) within the adopted local plan. The quadrants of the central pavilion are Grade II listed and other listed structures/buildings are located throughout the park

## Topography

5. The site and surrounding park are relatively flat

## Planning History

6. The historic park has been in use since the 1930s and many applications relating to the wider park and its facilities have come forward for incremental alterations and improvements to on site facilities. More recently these include:

**4/1994/0322** – Rebuild bowls pavilion after fire damage. (APCON – 30/06/1994)

**4/1995/0694** – Rebuild of bowls pavilion after fire damage. (APCON – 28/09/1995)

**4/1996/0892** – Conversion to form youth hostel and associated car park (INSFEE – 27/03/1997)

**4/1996/0893** – Alteration works to form youth hostel (WD – 27/03/1997)

**4/1996/0894** – Alteration works to form children’s indoor play space and alterations to restaurant. (APCON – 14/07/1997)

**4/2000/0058** – Demolition and rebuilding of yacht pond. (LBC – 19/04/2000)

**4/2000/0654** – Construction of new walls within existing pond. (LBC – 12/09/2001)

**4/2001/0639** – Condition 2: details of materials for previous permission 4/2001/0209/F “Erection of building for model train shed”. (APCON – 08/10/2001)

**4/2002/0315** – Details of condition 03: landscaping for previous permission 4/2001/0209/F ‘erection of building for model train shed’ (APPR – 10/04/2002)

**03/00056/F** – Installation of CCTV system to car park, rose garden & quadrant pavilions & new gates & screens to yacht pavilion. (APPR – 27/10/2003)

**03/00057/L** – Installation of CCTV cameras to quadrant pavilions & bandstand & new gates & screens to yacht pavilion (APPR – 27/10/2003)

**07/00529/F** – Erection of 2 no. station canopies for miniature railway. (APPR – 14/06/2007)

**07/00598/L** – Removal of 8 no. CCTV camera in roof of bandstand and replacement with 1 no. CCTV camera in central roof/ceiling location . (APPR – 19/09/2007)

**08/00424/NF3** – Proposed construction of wheeled (skate park) sports facility with floodlighting. (APPR – 15/10/2008)

**09/01071/D** – (APPR – 19/01/2010); **10/00019/D** – (APPR – 29/01/2010); and **10/00928/D** – Details of previous planning permission 08/00424/NF3 (APPR – 10/08/2010).

**11/00208/NF3** – Construction of 4 No. porous Macadam tennis courts with floodlighting and fencing, including associated access path and lighting. (APPR – 25.05.2011).

## Equality and Diversity Issues

There are no significant equality or diversity issues

## The Proposal

7. The application is proposing a new access gate within the southern boundary to enable improved access to the boat pond from South Park Avenue. At present vehicles cross from the west access and car park to enable boats to be unloaded for use on the pond. The proposal includes grass and plant protection matting to the accessway and along the edge of the pond to protect established landscape features from vehicles being driven in this area. The scheme

also proposes the provision of a parking area for people with disabilities.

## Representations Received

8. Advertised on site and in the press. Adjacent and neighbouring properties have been notified in writing. 12 letters of representation have been received citing the issues as summarised in the table below.

Issues Raised	Response
Entrance is near to junction, bend in road and near bus stops. Road has existing problems and gate poses conflicts and risks to pedestrian, drivers and buses.	Paras 11 and 30
Will impede a footpath within the park.	Paras 17 and 25
Gate will enable children/dogs to leave the park straight onto the road.	Para 26
Club members cause existing verge parking problems at adjacent junctions and double yellow line areas.	Para 30
Cars should not be allowed within park and will create more not less parking.	Paras 15, 16, 17, 30 and 31
Who/how will parking be monitored?	Paras 17 and 30
Design of the gate is unsuitable.	Para 13
Scheme will detract from the parks character.	Paras 9, 10, 25 and 29
Car parking will detract from listed status of buildings and park.	Paras 9, 10 and 29
Parking is inappropriate use of recreational area and will detract from the enjoyment of the park.	Paras 9, 10, 25 and 29
Scheme has limited benefits to the public as a whole.	Paras 14 and 29
Plastic mesh will get muddy.	Para 27
Club members could use a trolley to move boats.	Does not form part of the application proposals

## Consultation Responses

9. **English Heritage (EH):** Eaton Park is included EH's register of parks and gardens of special historic interest at grade II. EH is not normally consulted on planning applications affecting a grade II park [...]. EH gave pre-application advice in our letter of 19<sup>th</sup> January 2011, which followed a site visit. In summary, the proposals are not found to be detrimental to the significance of the registered park, are consistent with advice given previously by EH in regard of car parking provision within the park and satisfy PPS5 HE9.4, wherein the public benefit of the proposal can be seen to outweigh its harm.
10. Accordingly, we recommend that this application is consented as a drop off point only (with allowances for limited disability car parking in agreement with yourself).

11. **Transportation Officer:** I have previously agreed the location of this access which is not ideally situated almost opposite Pettus Road, but is only to be used occasionally, and by a few vehicles accessing the boating lake. I would be concerned if the access were to be used more intensively. Please therefore can we restrict its use to accessing that associated parking drop-off area only, and ensure that in the area there are appropriate barriers to prevent vehicles from entering the rest of the park.
12. **Conservation and Design:** I have no objection in principle to the provision of new access to the boat pond, which would appear to have public benefits in terms of providing better access to the pond for disabled users and boat club users generally. The plant and protection matting is reversible and if planted carefully and lightly used should not unduly harm the character and appearance of the park.
13. I am however concerned about the design of the 'field' gate which is very untraditional in appearance and not appropriate for a 1930's municipal park. The boat club was given advice to choose an estate railing or field gate which would complement the existing hedge and park setting; however the proposed gate bears no resemblance to such gates and appears modern and utilitarian in design, more appropriate for an ordinary car park entrance. The gate also does not provide a sufficient sense of 'enclosure', or actual real enclosure, to match that of the perimeter hedge. The introduction of a more appropriately designed gate could actually enhance the park to some extent with an interesting design. Such gates are readily available. [Following these comments the design of the gate has been revised.]
14. **Green Spaces:** Norwich Model Boat Club, through the lease of the model boat pond pavilion and use of the pond ensure regular use of this area of the park. The club have worked closely with the council to improve the upkeep of this area of the park and to provide a quality facility for the sailing of model boats, for all visitors to the park. A regular presence and an area that looks cared for play an important role in the reduction of Anti-Social Behaviour and vandalism. Difficulties for some members getting equipment to the pond have the potential to cause a decline in membership, and the potential loss of the club from the park which is most undesirable.
15. For a number of years an arrangement has been in place to enable members of the club with disabled parking permits, to apply for a pass and key from the council to allow them to drive through the park, from the access barrier at the community centre to the pond, with their equipment and park in an agreed area close to the lake at the end nearest the bandstand area. There are specific requirements attached to how they drive through the park, which, if they are not complied with, will result in the removal of the permit and return of the key. The club manage this arrangement very effectively and I have had no reason to withdraw any passes from members, so as a result have no concerns relating to compliance with any conditions relating to the use of the proposed facility. At this point I feel it would be unnecessary to introduce any other physical measures to restrict vehicle movements in that area once they have entered the park, as failure to comply with the agreed conditions for use of this access, would result in the club losing the use of this access.
16. The informal parking area is at the opposite end of the pond to the pavilion, which is a problem for members with mobility problems who wish to use the club facilities, and is not ideal following the installation of a stair lift funded by the club in the pavilion. The completion of the skatepark, and high levels of use of the facility at similar times to when the club is using the pond, results in boat club members with disabled passes, now having to drive through an area containing often high numbers of people many of whom are travelling on bicycles or skateboards. Measures need to be put in place to resolve this unsatisfactory situation, and the proposed access point for parking/drop off will enable this to happen, and a relocation of the

area in which members with a disabled pass are able to put their vehicles. It will also remove cars from the central area of the park which will be a visual improvement.

17. There have been discussions with the club around their proposals and use of the parking/drop off area. If the application is approved, conditions of use will be defined prior to the access and parking area being created. Failure to comply with the conditions would result in the use of the facility being withdrawn. Based on the fact that there is already an arrangement in place that allows some vehicles into the park, the relocation of the parking to the periphery of the park and the benefits to the council of having a vibrant and inclusive club in the centre of one of its premier parks, I have no objections to raise in relation to the application.
18. **Arboricultural Officer:** This should be achievable in tree terms as long as any planning permission is conditioned to ensure that the provisions laid out in the Arboricultural Impact Assessment/Arboricultural Method Statement are completely adhered to and the construction of the no-dig road and any other work within the RPA is carried out under arboricultural supervision.

## **ASSESSMENT OF PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

### **Relevant Planning Policies**

#### **Relevant National Planning Policies**

- PPS1 Delivering Sustainable Development
- PPS5 Planning and the Historic Environment
- PPG17 Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation

#### **Relevant policies of the adopted East of England Plan Regional Spatial Strategy 2008**

- ENV3 Biodiversity
- ENV6 Historic environment
- ENV7 Quality in the Built Environment

#### **Relevant policies of the adopted Joint Core Strategy for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk 2011**

- 1 Addressing climate change and protecting environmental assets
- 2 Promoting good design
- 7 Supporting communities

#### **Relevant saved policies of the adopted City of Norwich Replacement Local Plan 2004**

- EP22 High standard of amenity for residential occupiers
- HBE9 Listed Buildings
- HBE12 High quality of design
- NE1 Protection of environmental assets from inappropriate development
- NE8 Species protection and biodiversity
- NE9 Landscaping
- SR3 Retention of existing sports grounds and public open spaces
- SR8 Protection of historic parks and gardens
- SR14 Design and amenity considerations for new facilities

### **Supplementary Planning Documents and Guidance**

Trees and Development SPD – September 2007

#### **Written Ministerial Statement: 23 March 2011: Planning for Growth**

Support of enterprise and sustainable development.

## **Principle of Development**

### **Policy Considerations**

19. There are various main policies within the Replacement Local Plan which are relevant to this site. Policy SR8 seeks to protect the character and historic form of the historic parks from any development that would adversely affect their character. Development will only be permitted where it increases community use and biodiversity, whilst not adversely affecting the character of the park. In addition, policy NE1 requires that in parklands that form a green wedge, development will only be permitted for facilities for outdoor sport and recreation and in design these must not damage the environmental quality or landscape character of the area. Policy SR3 seeks to prevent the loss of open space or adverse impacts on biodiversity interests within such spaces and policy SR14 seeks to limit impacts in terms of design and impacts on amenity.
20. Therefore the policies are permissive of supporting recreational related development in the park, providing that they can demonstrate that they will not detract from its historic character, setting, space provision and biodiversity interest or have an adverse impact in terms of amenity.

## **Impact on Living Conditions**

### **Noise and Disturbance**

21. Some comments have been made about the noise from motor boats using the pond and this being a general nuisance. This comment is not directly related to this proposal but to activities generally. The proposed scheme does not relate to operations on the pond but to access to the boat pond. The boat club have commented that they now have in place noise measuring equipment and give advice to members to ensure that motor craft do not exceed a set maximum noise level. If noise was an issue this is something that should be controlled through the management of the park or via input from pollution control officers to prevent noise nuisance.

## **Design**

### **History and Layout**

22. The park was designed principally to provide facilities for outside recreation in the city. The park was divided up into 'sectors' of activity, with different sports occupying different areas. The plan of the park was arranged to create the central axis and pavilion, but was also planned around providing the required spaces for activities to maximise the use of the space. This proposal lies adjacent to the boating lake, to the south of the central pavilion. This proposal seeks to support the historic recreational use of this part of the park.
23. The access and drop off area are aimed at improving the use and access to the boating pond for members of the boat club to unload boats and then to move off site. The proposed access is to the west of the boat pond and the associated drive route comes diagonally away from the south path and boundary and then opens into a 30 metre by 12 metre mesh protected space next to the pond area.
24. The protective matting involves a no-dig cell web to the start of the drive route area next to trees on site and then a lighter weight turf protector mesh to the remainder of the drive and larger turning area. A space for parking 2 vehicles is shown in the bottom corner.
25. Other alterations and changes have occurred within the park over time, for example changes and extension of the model railway track, and this to some extent shows the evolving nature of the park to enable its continued use and success. The proposal should provide a balance between the needs of the boat club both to ensure its future and to remove vehicle movements across the wider park and the needs to protect other users of the park and the retention of a range of functions and activities within the park.

## **Design and Form**

26. The cell/mesh protection is a form of protecting grass areas within green settings and is widely used in various locations to enable short term access and parking on green space. The original design for the gates was for a simple metal barrier with open bottom. Following discussion the scheme has been revised to metal “field” gates which are more sympathetic to the age and character of the park. These now provide cross bars to the bottom section which also reduces the opportunity to egress through the closed gate.
27. The principal change in visual terms will be the installation of the new gates within the existing southern boundary hedge line. The visual impact of surface works should be minimal and should still be seen and maintained as lawn areas. Parking and unloading occurs within this already but the proposal provides a safer internal route and potential to control parking and movements within this space. The design is such to meet demands of users and to be of a form which limits any visual impacts in the area. Subject to conditions limiting the parking of vehicles within the area and to details of colour for the gates the proposed changes are considered to be acceptable in appearance and form and in keeping with the park setting.

## **Impact on Heritage Assets**

28. The nature of the proposal will result in some degree of change to both the existing historic landscape of the Park and the setting of the boat house and pond. However, the scale and location of the proposal means that the development and use of this area will only have an impact in the very localised area where they are positioned. Additional planting is to be provided to the east where there is a gap in the existing hedge and this will assist in offsetting the proposed new break in the hedge to the southern boundary.
29. In some respects it is considered that the most significant part of the character of the Park is formed by its recreational use around which the Park was designed. The proposals respect the historic use and character of the Park, and are merely updating the facilities so that Eaton Park can continue to be Norwich’s principal recreational Park into the C21. English Heritage and conservation advice is that the proposals are not found to be detrimental to the significance of the registered park, are consistent with advice given previously by EH in regard of car parking provision within the park and satisfy PPS5 HE9.4, wherein the public benefit of the proposal can be seen to outweigh its harm. The operation will add further to the character of the Park as a ‘recreational resource’ rather than detracting from it. Therefore the degree of harm in this instance is not considered to be substantial when considering the preservation of the significance of the heritage asset.

## **Transport and Access**

### **Vehicular Access and Parking**

30. It is understood that the access is only to be used occasionally, and by a few vehicles accessing the boating lake. The location has been assessed and the proposal sited within the safest spot to give close access to the boat pond. There would be concerns if the access were to be used more intensively and it is therefore suggested that the use is restricted to use for the club for access to drop-off boats only and that no parking of vehicles shall take place within the area except within the area shown within the south-east corner. Parking issues beyond the park can not be controlled through the planning application process and should be subject to other parking regulation controls.
31. The transportation officer also requested appropriate barriers to prevent vehicles from entering the rest of the park. However, following discussions with Green Spaces officers it is considered that these could raise other amenity and safety issues within the park. Access across the park by motor vehicles will therefore be controlled under management arrangements rather than introducing any physical barrier.

## **Trees and Landscaping**

### **Loss of Trees or Impact on Trees**

32. The scheme is designed to take account of and seeks to retain existing trees around the site and to protect the hedge either side of the new gateway. The development sits within the green edges of the site thereby retaining the significant amenity and ecological value of the landscaping within this area
33. As part of the protection scheme a tree protection zone is proposed and construction access limited to specific areas only. It will be important however to ensure that trees and hedges to be retained are protected during construction and conditions are suggested to protect such planting during construction.

### **Replacement Planting**

34. The formal hedge along the southern boundary of the park is proposed to be breached in one place to enable links into the area. The proposed access will provide better links to the boating pond. As an offset to this loss it is proposed to plant additional native hedging to an existing gap in the south boundary. This should match the existing enclosure hedge and redefine this part of the boundary. The replanting will also increase biodiversity within the area. Conditions are suggested to control soft landscape treatments and to ensure their maintenance.

## **Conclusions**

35. In terms of the principle of development and the siting of the development, the scheme will support an essential recreation and outdoor facility and will encourage the use of the Park. Subject to further submission and approval of details in accordance with the planning conditions listed below the proposal represents an acceptable development that will enhance recreational facilities for the city as a whole whilst limiting impacts on the users of the historic park and improving its biodiversity interest and landscape features.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

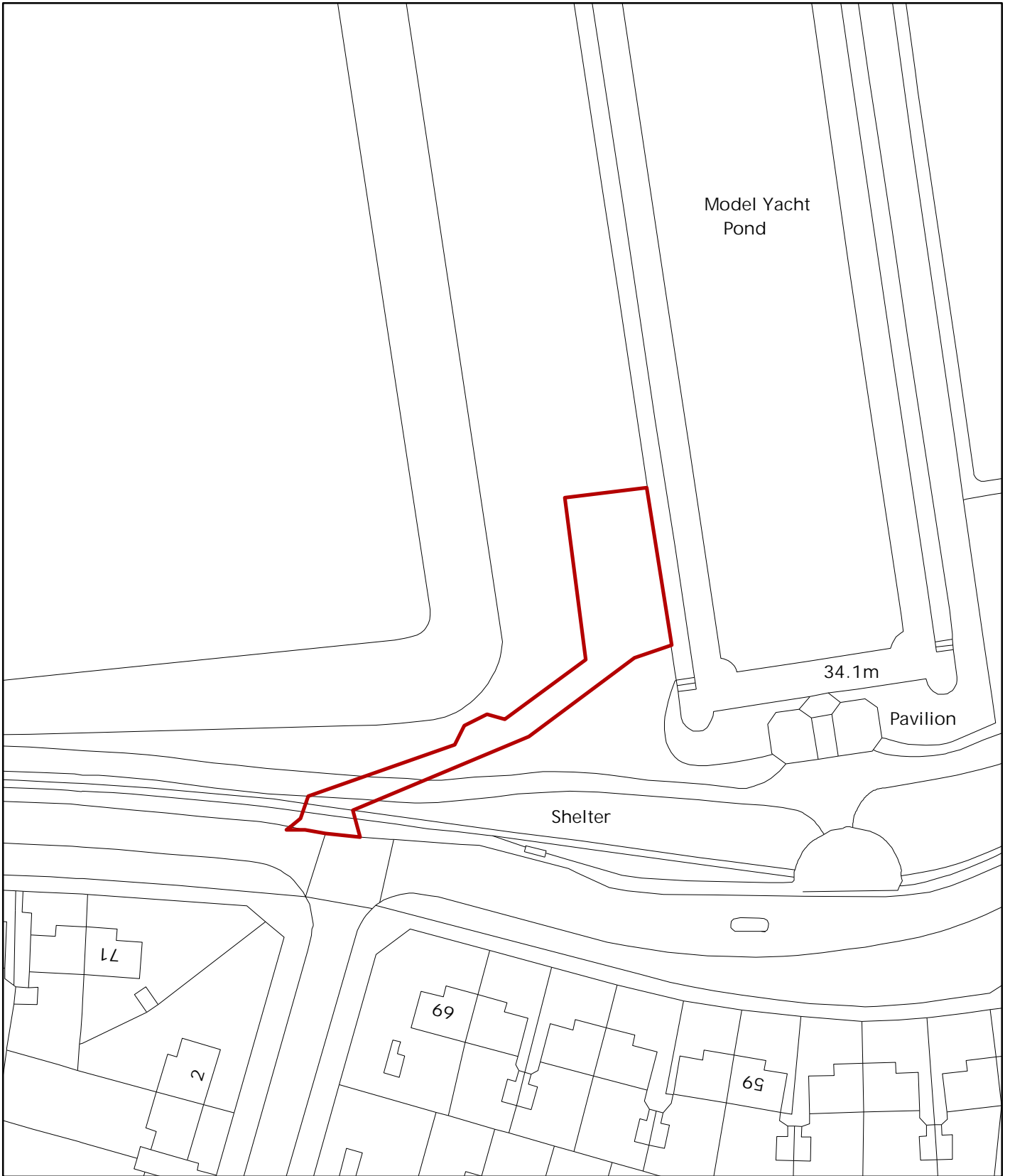
To approve Application No 11/00244/F Model Boat Club Pavilion Eaton Park South Park Avenue Norwich and grant planning permission, subject to the following conditions:-

- 1) Commencement within 3 years;
- 2) In accordance with drawings listed;
- 3) Details of gates/posts colour;
- 4) Detail of Arboricultural site monitoring;
- 5) Compliance with AIA;
- 6) Retention of tree protection;
- 7) Landscaping;
- 8) Landscape maintenance;
- 9) Control on use of access and parking within area;

Reasons for approval: The proposal would result in an appropriate and satisfactory form of development that would further enhance use of recreational and outdoor facilities within the historic park. The siting of the gates and surface treatments would create an acceptable relationship to its surroundings and the scheme would maintain the value of the area as a recreational resource; its character and the appearance of the overall park setting; and significance of the heritage asset. Safe access and use should be achievable subject to the imposition of conditions. As such, the proposal would comply with PPS1, PPS5 and PPG17; policies ENV3, ENV6 and ENV7 of the east of England Plan 2008; policies 1, 2 and 7 of the Joint Core Strategy 2011; and policies EP22, HBE9, HBE12, NE1, NE8, NE9, SR3, SR8, SR12 and



SR14 of the City of Norwich Replacement Local Plan Adopted Version, November 2004 and to all other material considerations:



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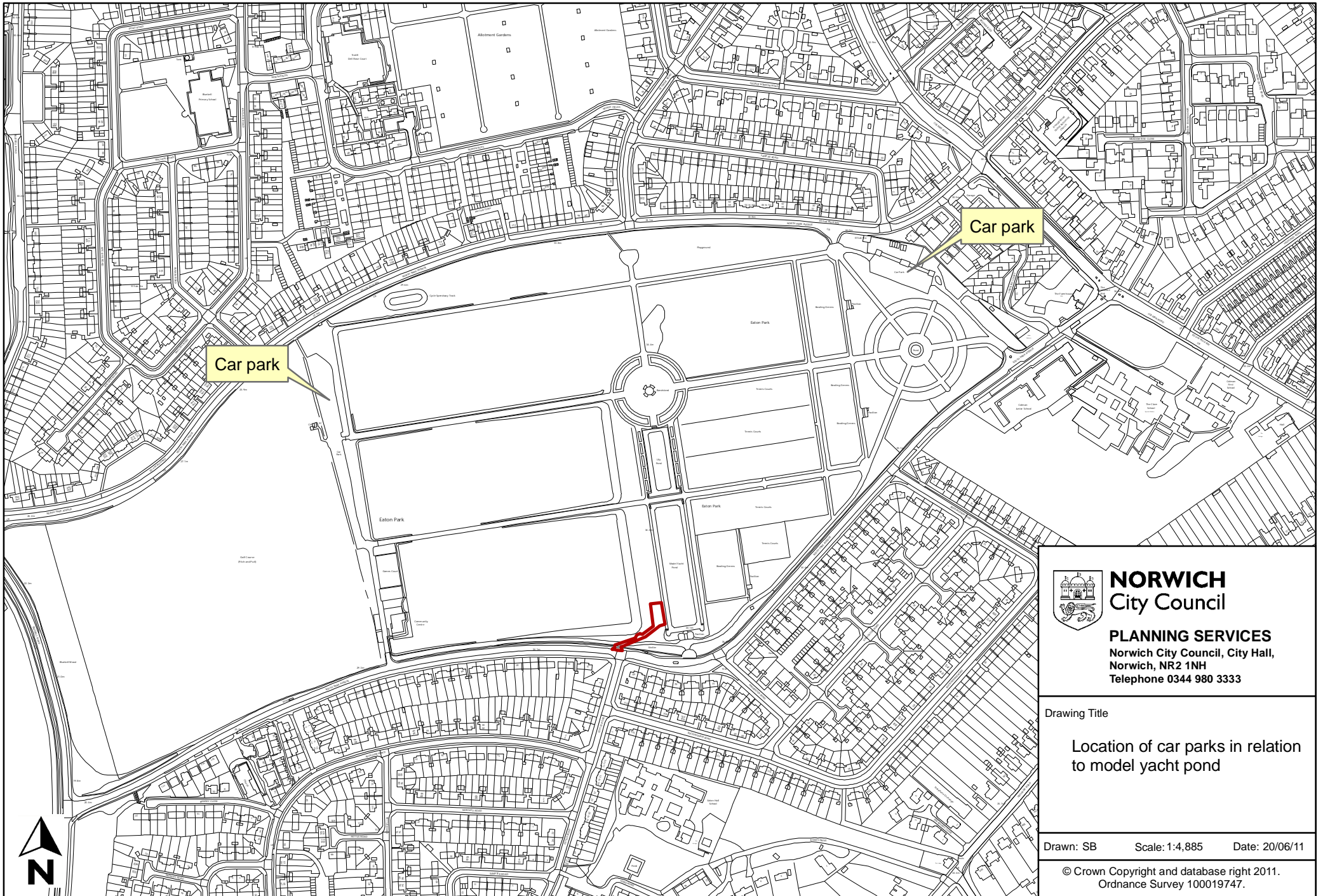
Planning Application No 11/00244/F  
Site Address Boat Club Eaton Park  
Scale 1:750



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Drawing Title

Location of car parks in relation  
to model yacht pond

Drawn: SB      Scale: 1:4,885      Date: 20/06/11

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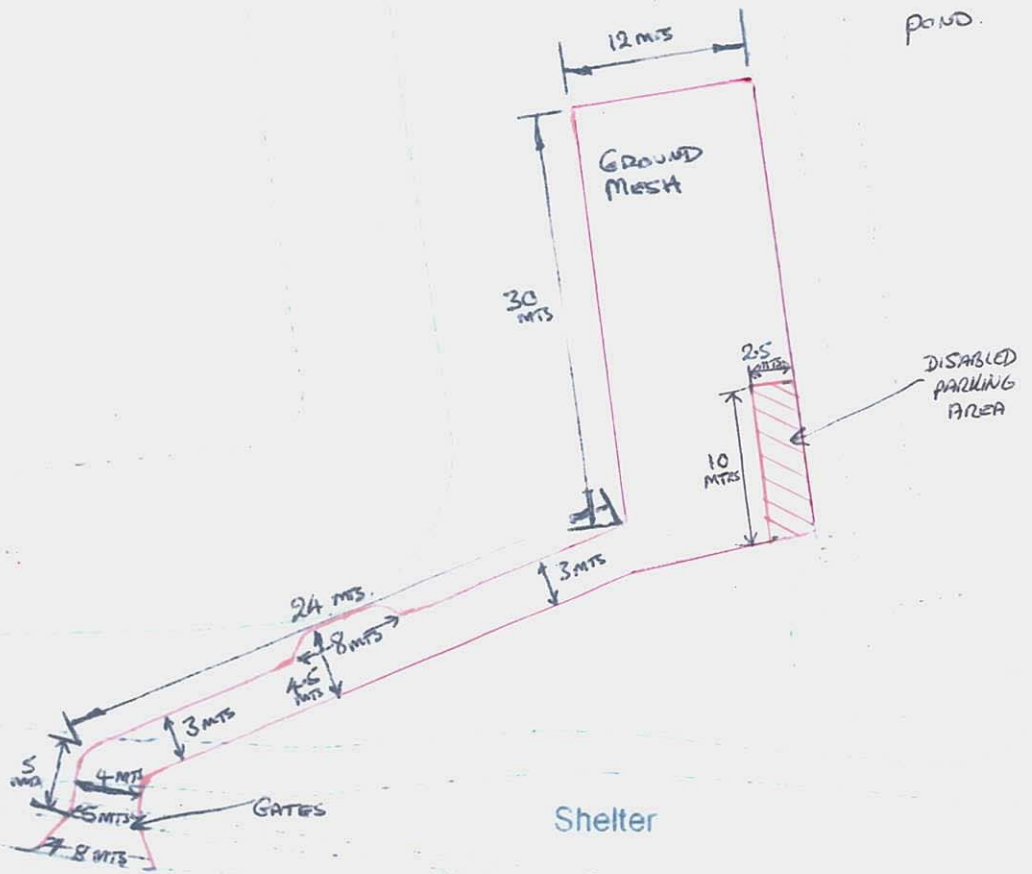
(DISABLED PARKING AREA)



BLOCK PLAN  
AREA 90m x 90m  
SCALE 1:500

CENTRE COORDINATES: 620553, 307274

Organisational Development  
25 MAR 2011  
Post Room



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11/00244F

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BLOCK PLAN  
AREA 90m x 90m  
SCALE 1:500

CENTRE COORDINATES: 620553, 307274

