

## Planning Applications Committee

11 September 2008

<b>Agenda Number:</b>	<b>B2 (Please note this item will be taken at 2.00 p.m.)</b>
<b>Section/Area:</b>	OUTER
<b>Ward:</b>	TOWN CLOSE
<b>Officer:</b>	Neil Campbell
<b>Valid Date:</b>	19th March 2008
<b>Application Number:</b>	08/00255/O
<b>Site Address :</b>	Norwich City College Ipswich Road Norwich NR2 2LL
<b>Proposal:</b>	Redevelopment of College Campus for Education Use with associated administrative and ancillary facilities (D1) plus additional atria space together with car parking and landscaping.
<b>Applicant:</b>	<b>Norwich City College Of Further And Higher Education</b>
<b>Agent:</b>	<b>QUBE Planning Ltd</b>

### THE SITE

The application site is located south east of Ipswich Road between the Ipswich Grove cul de sac and Cecil Road. The site is an established educational facility. The main site access is at the southern end of the site frontage to Ipswich Road. The site is bordered by a number residential properties situated along Cecil Road, Grove Walk and Ipswich Grove. An educational facility and residential properties are on the opposite site of the Ipswich Road frontage. The site includes a number of educational buildings, offices, canteens, student accommodation and workshops. There are car parking areas to the rear of the site, at the northern end and outside the main reception building along the Ipswich Road. There are no listed buildings on site. The site is adjacent to the Newmarket Road Conservation Area.

Over 16,000 students were enrolled at the college last year. The existing campus has a number of buildings which total 39,150 square metres of gross internal floor space. The

existing buildings vary in height with the Cromer building (Ipswich Road) being 3.93m. high and the Norwich building being the tallest at 17.60m. high.

## **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

There has been numerous planning applications submitted over time at the site, the applications which are relevant to this application are:

- 08/00419/C - Removal of existing prefabricated terrapin educational centre on the adjacent site
- 08/00420/F - Remove existing prefabricated terrapin educational building and erection of new teaching building on the adjacent site.
- 08/00710/F – Excavation of deep bore holes for ground source heat recovery system (pending) on the adjacent site.

## **THE PROPOSAL**

An outline planning application has been submitted to Norwich City Council for the phased redevelopment of the City College Norwich (CCN) campus site on Ipswich Road for educational use with associated administrative and ancillary facilities (D1) plus additional atria space together with car parking and landscaping.

The definition of an outline planning application is an application for the erection of building/buildings, which if granted would be subject to a condition requiring the subsequent approval of the local planning authority with respect to one or more reserved matters. Reserved matters in relation to an outline planning permission, or an application for such permission, means any of the following matters, namely siting, design, external appearance, means of access and the landscaping of the site.

This outline application for planning consent states that all matters are to be reserved. The application is formally submitted with a number of parameter plans which indicate the siting of the proposed development including car parking and access points, the maximum height of the proposed buildings and the extent of a perimeter zone for tree planting and landscaping. A Design and Access Statement has been submitted with further indicative information including elevations and artists impressions, however these elements are not for determination under this application and are only indicative of one way in which the proposals may evolve. The documents submitted with the application include:

- Design and access statement
- Transport assessment
- Arboricultural assessment
- Sustainability statement
- Flood risk assessment
- Geo-environmental report
- Phase 1 habitat survey & protected species risk assessment

The original proposal sought permission for the following:

- Erection of a number of buildings for educational use on the existing Norwich City College campus to increase the gross internal floor space from 39,150 sq m. to 66,555 sq. m. an increase of 70%.
- A number of development zones/building areas varying in size based on the height/width and length of the proposed buildings. Proposed buildings heights range from 10 m. to 25 m., proposed widths vary from 6 m. to 82.5 m. and proposed lengths vary from 6 m. to 242.8 m.
- A two-storey decked car park with 650 spaces on the eastern boundary.
- Five access points with a circular parking and access zone.
- A green perimeter zone

### **Addendum Proposals**

Since submission of the original application the applicant produced an addendum detailing a number of changes to the application and the Council re-consultation has taken place. The main amendments put forward were as a result of feedback from the original application. The amendments include:

### **Access and Highways Amendments**

The principal amendments are to the access and parking arrangements in summary are:

- A significant reduction in the amount of on-site car parking. The principal car park proposed will reduce in capacity from 650 spaces in a decked car park to a surface car park with capacity for 345 cars, with revised access;
- Revised access arrangements to prevent an internal circular route for all vehicles except emergency vehicles.
- Access by vehicles to the area in front of the Norwich Building will be limited to College buses, coaches, taxis and for pick up and drop off. Car parking in this area will be limited to 20 disabled spaces;
- Managed service vehicle arrangements;
- The pick-up/drop-off southern access has been altered to enable retention of the pedestrian crossing North of Town Close Road;
- Agreement to employ a Travel Plan Co-ordinator to ensure delivery of the College's Travel Plan targets and the Car Park Management Strategy; and
- Relocation of the pedestrian crossing from that originally proposed to maintain the 'desire line' from Town Close Road to Cecil Road.

### **Arboricultural Amendments**

The applicant also responded to concerns raised locally regarding the protection, retention and removal of trees. A number of measures aimed at reducing any impact upon on site trees or mitigating against any harm have been put forward. These measures include extensive investigation into the exact location of roots, a tree protection plan produced and replacement of any trees lost with similar stock, these measures are detailed in the tree section of this report.

### **CONSULTATIONS**

**Anglian Water:** There is sufficient water resource capacity, water supply & foul sewerage networks to supply this development. The development can be accommodated within the public surface water network which at present has sufficient capacity. The application includes employment/commercial use therefore to discharge trade effluent requires Anglian Waters consent.

**East of England Regional Assembly:** The Regional Planning Panel Standing Committee considered the proposal and endorsed it as presented. Some disappointment was expressed that the main college building would be lost but it was felt that the developers were to be congratulated on their proposal in respect of the attention given to sustainable, low carbon development.

**Environment Agency:** Has raised no objection to the proposal subject to the applicant providing a scheme for the provision and implementation of surface water drainage prior to the commencement of development in writing to the satisfaction of the local planning authority in consultation with the agency. This could be secured through condition.

**Environmental Health Officer:** Raises no objection to the development on the grounds of Noise, Odour, Contaminated Land, External Lighting, Biomass Boiler and the Construction Phase subject to the suitable conditions to limit any potential for impact upon this area which the officer describes as being “a fairly quiet residential area and nearby residents are acutely aware of activities at the college”.

**Local Members Cllr Chris Hull & Stephen Little:** Comments have been summarised and appended to the report.

**Neighbours:** At the time of writing there have been in the region of 350 letters in relation to this application of these in the region of 50 have been of support from local businesses and some residents. The remaining letters are from concerned residents objecting to the proposal. All comments have been summarised and appended to the report any late representations will be reported verbally at the meeting.

**Norfolk Constabulary:** Supports the proposal as for the past few years the City College has steadily grown, particularly in the business community. The College has forged important partnerships with local employers and moved in alliance with the University of East Anglia, which has resulted in many new diplomas and a real partnership of working between higher education and the private and public sector. The College and the Constabulary work closely together and they fund a scheme dedicated to patrolling the campus and working with students. In order to maintain its growth the College needs to be seen as a country-wide resource. The existing estate does not inspire young people or visitors. The redevelopment of the campus could move Norwich to the very front of the list of Further Educational facilities in the country.

**Norfolk County Council, Highways Development Control officer:** Norfolk County Council as Strategic Highway Authority has scrutinised all the information supplied with this application including the latest addendum information and is satisfied that the measures proposed for Ipswich Road will address the impacts that the development will have on the local transport network. The reduced level of on-site car parking and the Travel Plan will ensure that the development is as sustainable as practicable.

**Norfolk County Council Senior Travel Plan Officer:** The Travel Plan is acceptable. To cover the cost of reviewing and monitoring the Travel Plan the Council levies a Commuted Sum of £2,500 (£500 for each of the first five years) on occupation of the first part of the redevelopment.

**Norfolk County Council Director Childrens Services:** City College provide a wide range of vocational and academic courses to around 5,500 students from Norwich and more widely from the County of Norfolk. The College has proved to be a vital part of the provision we have in the County for 14-19 year olds, with 34% of all 16-19 year olds studying at the College. They are a key partner for many education providers, including over 30 high schools. They work very effectively with employers to ensure that the future workforce has the right skills for the future Norfolk economy. The college has been awarded National Skills Academy status for its work in Financial Services. These are excellent and important achievements which make a real difference to young people's lives and the economy of Norfolk, but the existing campus is too small for the College to build on these existing strengths to contribute more in our collective efforts to improve the skills and attainment in Norfolk and Norwich which still, sadly, lag behind the national average. The new campus would offer more opportunity in the form of a gym, a theatre and a spa which would develop the existing Learning model where students could learn in a proper business-like environment. It will enable a refresh of the rather tired facilities which do not meet business expectations in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It will also enable student numbers to expand. Currently not enough 16 year olds progress to further and higher education, this project would attract more youngsters to study. We need our young people to be inspired and to experience the very best in learning. This development would help enormously with that and I wholeheartedly support it.

**Wildlife Trust:** Habitat Survey – has no objection to the findings of the report but wish to draw attention to section 3.4 regarding limitations of the survey, which will necessitate the need for further surveys as recommended. We support the recommendations relating to protected species and phase II surveys. In our view, these surveys should be submitted prior to the submission of any detailed planning permissions. We fully support the enhancement recommendations.

## **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

### **Relevant National Planning Policy**

PPS1	Delivering Sustainable Development
PPS1 Supplement	Planning and Climate Change
PPS6	Planning for Town Centres

### **Relevant East of England Plan Policies, Adopted May 2008:**

E1 Job Growth  
ENV7: Quality in the built environment  
ENG1: Carbon dioxide emissions and energy performance  
NR1: Norwich Key Centre for Development and change  
SS2: Overall Spatial Strategy

### **Relevant Local Policies:**

#### **1. City of Norwich Replacement Local Plan, Adopted November 2004**

HBE12 – High quality of design, with special attention to height, scale, massing and form of development  
EP18 – High standard of energy efficiency for new development  
EP19 – Renewable energy development

EP20 – Sustainable use of materials  
EP22 – High standard of amenity for residential occupiers  
EMP19 – Development of education and training establishments  
TRA5 – Approach to design for vehicle movement and special needs  
TRA6 – Parking standards – maxima  
TRA7 – Cycle parking standards

## **2. City of Norwich Partnership – Sustainable Community Strategy**

Theme 1: City of Economic Growth & Enterprise

- To help enterprise flourish
- To raise aspirations, skills and achievement
- To develop the right infrastructure for business

Theme 3: City of Culture and Creativity

- To inspire people
- To create an environment where things can happen
- To improve quality of life
- To promote Norwich as a city of culture

Theme 6: City of Learning & Personal Development

- To improve levels of educational attainment
- To boost aspirations of and opportunities for people of all ages

## **3. Norwich Economic Strategy**

Skills, Aspirations and Employment

To raise aspirations and achievement by developing individual's learning opportunities and potential, to ensure that the needs and challenges of the economy are met.

- (i) Increase and improve the skills of Norwich citizens.
- (ii) Expand workforce development.
- (iii) Raise aspirations and develop an entrepreneurial / learning culture.
- (iv) Tackle access barriers to learning and employment.
- (v) Ensure that there is a strong economic component to regeneration and neighbourhood renewal strategies.

### **Policy assessment**

The proposal promotes national, regional and local economic and social objectives, as set out in this policy assessment, and therefore is acceptable in strategic terms.

Key detailed local environmental issues are considered in the “Discussion” section of this document.

### **National Policy**

PPS1 establishes overarching government planning policy. It states that local planning authorities should ensure that development plans promote outcomes in which environmental, economic and social objectives are achieved together over time.

PPS6, Planning for Town Centres, does not define education as a town centre use. As a result, there is no need for a sequential test to examine whether a more central location is available for the proposed development.

### **Regional Policy**

The growth of the area and the need for improved higher education facilities are a material consideration in relation to this planning application.

The **East of England Plan** was published by the government in May 2008 and forms part of the development plan for Norwich. The Plan proposes a very significant level of development in the Greater Norwich Area. Policy H1 requires a minimum of 33,000 additional new homes to be provided between 2001 and 2021 in the Norwich Policy Area (which consists of all of Norwich City plus parts of Broadland and South Norfolk) and policy E1 sets a target of 35,000 net job growth across Greater Norwich (all of Norwich, Broadland and South Norfolk) over the same period. Policy NR1 stresses that “Norwich should be a regional focus for housing, employment, retail, leisure, cultural and educational development” and sets a particular aim to “address the deprivation concentrated in parts of the urban area”.

The East of England Plan aims to deliver significant levels of housing and employment in genuinely sustainable communities. The objectives of the plan seek, among other things, to improve quality of life by “promoting social cohesion by improving access to work, services and other facilities, especially for those who are disadvantaged”. Policy SS2, the overall spatial strategy, states that planning policies should “ensure new development contributes to the creation of more sustainable communities ... and, in particular, require that new development contributes to improving quality of life, community cohesion and social inclusion, including by making suitable and timely provision for the needs of the health and social services sectors and primary, secondary, further and higher education particularly in areas of new development and priority areas for regeneration”.

### **Local Policy**

#### **The emerging Joint Core Strategy, the Sustainable Community Strategy and Norwich Economic Strategy:**

The proposal supports the social and economic aims set out in these existing and emerging documents.

The Issues and Options document of the emerging Joint Core Strategy for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk, has very limited status as yet, but shows how regional policy

is being interpreted locally. It stated that “Developing the knowledge economy is key to achieving sustainable economic growth”.

The Sustainable Community Strategy and the Norwich Economic Strategy form part of the evidence base for the emerging Joint Core Strategy. A Growth Infrastructure Study and an Employment Study have also been done to provide further evidence for the Joint Core Strategy. These are relevant considerations in relation to this application as they give local detail in relation to adopted East of England Plan policies and form the up-to-date evidence base required by government.

The Growth Infrastructure Study shows that there is a need to ensure that the existing low skilled population are retrained and upskilled to allow them access to the growing knowledge and vocational economy. The proposal would provide a purpose built, modern education facility which would help to address this significant local economic problem and encourage more people into vocational training to promote access to the knowledge economy.

The Employment Study states that Norwich is an ‘engine of growth’ which will drive growth in the sub-region. The existing higher education economic cluster should be supported as a focus for planning for employment growth in the area. It points to the need for the concentration of higher education institutes in urban areas.

### **Replacement Local Plan**

This document is a key consideration as the adopted plan for Norwich. The main policy relevant to this site is EMP19. It allows for educational development on the site subject to:

- Its capacity;
- An assessment of the environmental impact of significant development;
- The need to provide accommodation for full time students. The policy requires the provision of new accommodation for one third of the new student places resulting from the new development.

However, the supporting text encourages any significant expansion to City College to be located away from the existing site, due to potential effects on:

- adjoining uses,
- access issues
- loss of open space.

It encourages the college to provide for growth needs in the city centre as a more sustainable location. This text did not consider total redevelopment of the site as is proposed in this outline application, but was rather concerned with the potential impact of incremental growth on the site through extensions to existing buildings and new buildings.

Therefore the policy is permissive of educational development on the site, whilst the text suggests a city centre location for further educational development may be better. In Local Plans, policy takes precedence over text.



## **MAIN ISSUES**

In determining the suitability of the campus re-development, members will need to satisfy themselves on a number of issues:

- Is there a need for the development.
- Is the site suitable for the proposed intensification.
- Would the development lead to an unacceptable impact upon the adjacent conservation area.
- Are the buildings of an appropriate size and scale for the locality.
- Has the applicant satisfied transportation requirements is the site accessible and well served by a choice of means of transport.
- Would the development result in an unacceptable impact upon the existing trees and vegetation on the site.
- Would the development lead to an unacceptable impact upon the residential amenity in the area.
- Is the proposal sustainable.

### **Need**

The East of England is a large and diverse area, with a population of 5.5 million. An additional 880,000 people are likely to be living in the region by 2028, though the impact of planned developments suggests that the growth could be even greater. There is a need to respond to the additional demand for learning places. The East of England Learning Skills Council (LSC) are a government body working to develop a responsive system of learning and skills provision that will meet the needs of learners, businesses and communities throughout the East of England, supporting the long term prosperity the region.

The LSC states that all colleges in the region should have renewed significant parts of their estate by 2012 and are making funding available for this to happen. Norfolk will see more than £100 million invested in new campuses between 2008 and 2011, to ensure buildings are fit for purpose and investment is directed to appropriate regional and area needs.

The city is a major regional service centre providing employment, educational, leisure and cultural opportunities for the populations of Norwich, Norfolk and the north of the region. While the Norwich economy has much to offer to those with good qualifications and skills, many local people have low levels of educational attainment and skills. One-fifth of Norwich City Council area residents live within the most deprived 3% of areas in the country for education, skills and training. Around one-third of the City's adult population has basic skills needs. Figures from 2007 show that less than one-half of 16 year olds in the Norwich City Council area left school with five or more GCSEs at A-C. As a result, many of the City's residents are trapped in low wage, low skill employment. Therefore providing the local population with the education and skills they need to be able to positively contribute to the local economy is a priority.

The Further Education (FE) sector (specifically City College Norwich) is leading the way in providing local young people with the skills they need. The new 14-19 Diplomas are one such example of this, as they are aimed at offering students a choice of academic and vocational courses to suit their needs and the needs of employers. City College in delivering the new diplomas has developed strong partnerships with local schools, any uncertainty over their future location would only hinder progress.

As previously stated there is an expected population growth for the City, there is also predicted growth in the number of jobs in the Greater Norwich area this will lead to a growth in employer demand for training. Norwich City College is the largest provider of vocational training in the area this means that in the future the demand for further education will be greater than it is today. To provide for the increase demand City College needs a step change in infrastructure to provide this to 21 century requirements the Councils Economic Development Service are supportive of the planned expansion on the current site which is accessible.

The level of investment from the LSC based on the projected growth agenda and desire of the applicant to improve facilities and provide a first class learning facility demonstrates that there is a need for the proposed development.

Policy EMP19 refers to the need to provide accommodation for full-time students. The applicant has stated that the nature of the training they provide has changed over recent years and that the delivery of courses is now provided to a younger age group, fewer full-time students, and predominately serve a local catchment. Existing accommodation on the site would be demolished and the college has stated that much of this accommodation is currently unused or used as offices/storage and that they do not intend to provide on-site residential accommodation in future.

### **Location**

Some local residents are suggesting that if the College is set to grow it would be better doing so on an alternative site. The current City College buildings are no longer fit for delivering high quality further and higher education, and improved facilities are essential. However, PPS6, Planning for Town Centres, does not define education as a town centre use. As a result, there is no need for a sequential test to examine whether a more central location is available for the proposed development.

Although in terms of accessibility terms a site within the City Centre would undoubtedly be ideal this site, close to the city centre, is accessible by good bus services, and is within an area where parking restraint can operate successfully in partnership with appropriate travel planning and infrastructure improvements to promote more sustainable transport. It is far preferable to an out of centre location. This application must therefore be determined on its merits – and could not be refused because members would prefer it to be located somewhere else.

### **Design**

The confusing, unplanned and poor quality buildings which currently occupy the majority of the campus are typical of many public institutions that have grown on a single site over a long period of time in response to sporadic but meagre funding opportunities. Redevelopment gives the opportunity to design a coherent campus with quality buildings and spaces appropriate for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Demolition of all the existing buildings does not require permission.

The Norwich Building has considerable presence on Ipswich Road and has been the physical embodiment of the college in people's minds for 50 years but it is not listed. A new building would perform better as learning space and environmentally over the life span of the building (although it will take time to offset the loss of embodied energy in the existing building and the resources expended in new construction). It would need to

be designed to at least as high an architectural standard and this would be dealt with at reserved matters stage.

The redevelopment proposals involve constructing buildings that are considerably higher than those currently on the site. The key information is presented on parameter plan 3 submitted with the application (appended to this report). If the buildings were all constructed to the maximum heights shown on that plan and especially if the architecture is unrelieved and monolithic (like the current Norfolk Building), then the result would be a campus that was out of place in its setting. However, the floor-space limit of 66,555sq m that will be established through the permission means that the buildings are highly unlikely to all be built to these heights. If the buildings where to be built at the maximum heights shown on the parameter plan the total floor space of the resulting campus could be in excess of 90,000sq m.

These important elements of the design would be dealt with at reserved matters stage. There will need to be variations in the finished building heights and the plan indicates that the height emphasis will be in the north-west corner of the site, where the arrival from the city centre can be heralded. This will also be one of the first buildings erected and its stature will need to outweigh that of the Norwich Building, pending the replacement of the later. The plan also encourages a variation of building height across the site to avoid a monolithic architectural outcome. There are safeguards built into the parameter plan that mean tolerances for altering building lines and varying height between zones are limited, especially on sensitive edges of the site.

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There would be a reduction in space dedicated to parking and vehicular access from 30% to 18% of the overall site area in more clearly defined areas than the current arrangements (see appended drawings) The proposals involve creating surface car parking area in a single unobtrusive location at the rear of the site and a simpler network of routes for vehicles around the perimeter that do not intrude on the main area of pedestrian circulation between and approaching buildings. The reduction in space dedicated to parking and vehicular access allow space to be released for hard landscape (6% to 15%). These will be positive external spaces related to buildings and

allowing students to socialise, rather than the incoherent and fragmented series of external social spaces available to students at the moment

### **Conservation Area**

The character of the part of the Newmarket Road Conservation Area that is opposite the site is largely created by mature trees and landscaping with buildings set back from the road frontages. The corner building (Thetford Building) to Cecil Rd is also within the Conservation Area consisting of an attractive Edwardian building and its rear gardens with portable buildings. Apart from this corner plot the houses backing onto the site on the three boundaries are not within the Conservation Area.

The scale and location of buildings proposed in relation to Ipswich Road, providing that there is a good quality, landscaped space in front of the buildings (and this would be controlled via reserved matters), the retention of trees, the demolition of the Cromer Building that is very close to the road will be demolished and the new building set back further, allowing extra trees to be planted and improved parking arrangements would improve the visual outlook.

Therefore the proposal would not harm the setting, character and appearance of the Newmarket Road Conservation Area.

### **Transportation/Travel Plan**

Land use planning has a key role in delivering the Government's integrated transport strategy. By shaping the pattern of development and influencing the location, scale, density, design and mix of land uses, planning can help to reduce the need to travel, reduce the length of journeys and make it safer and easier for people to access jobs, shopping, leisure facilities and services by public transport, walking, and cycling.

Consistent application of planning policies helps to reduce some of the need for car journeys (by reducing the physical separation of key land uses) and enable people to make sustainable transport choices. The Council aims to reduce congestion and pollution and achieve better access to development and facilities.

Officers consider that the application as amended benefits the scheme as a whole and addresses a number of concerns raised by local residents. The application now proposes a significant reduction in the number of car parking spaces from the present 650 to 345. This will significantly reduce car movements on the local road network and within the College site, with the consequent reduction in noise, emissions and disturbance. The omission of the car park deck should address residents' concerns about the loss of privacy and the impact of lights from cars manoeuvring on the deck.

The applicant within the Transport Assessment states that there is scope to improve the infrastructure on and off campus. Should consent be granted the Council aims to secure off site improvements through condition. This would include conditions covering the alterations required along the Ipswich Road frontage of the site to include details of all the alterations along the site frontage including:

- Alterations to on- street Traffic Regulation Orders in the vicinity of the site to facilitate changes to access etc.

- The moving of pedestrian crossing facilities and bus stops.
- The provision of quality bus stops adjacent to the site, with Real-time information.
- The provision of right turning lanes, and any associated kerb re-alignments/signing.
- Footway widening on the site frontage.
- The construction of new access points to the site, and the closure/re-instatement of footway of the existing ones.
- The provision of cycleways on Ipswich Road between the junctions with Daniels Road and Newmarket Road/Grove Road.

Further conditions relating to the implementation of the Travel Plan, provision of cycle/motorcycle and car parking, implementation of an agreed car park management strategy and management of servicing facilities can be imposed.

Norfolk County Council accepts as satisfactory the Travel Plan for the City College Redevelopment the Highway Authority formal accepts the Plan. Therefore the Council considers the Travel Plan to be acceptable. To cover the cost of reviewing and monitoring the Travel Plan the Council levies a Commuted Sum of £2,500 (£500 for each of the first five years) and this be sent out on occupation of the first part of the redevelopment. This can be secured through condition. The applicant has agreed to appoint a Travel Plan Coordinator with effect from December 2008 who will be responsible for implementing the Travel Plan and Car Park Management Strategy.

In light of the amendments to the application to overcome highways objections and imposition of conditions related to the provision of off site highway improvements and the travel plan the Council considers the proposals to be acceptable in highways and parking terms and that the aims of the Council to reduce car journeys can be achieved by this development.

### **Trees/Landscaping**

The vegetation located on and adjacent to City College Norwich contributes to the character and appearance of the area. Every effort has been made to accommodate the retention of the site's trees, however given the topography of the site, the applicants requirements and other limiting criteria, some removals are unavoidable. This has caused concern for both the residents and the Council

The applicant in response to concerns from the Councils Tree Officer relating to the proposed removal of tree ref: T12 (Corsican Pine) & the incursion of the proposed new entrance/exit/access road into the Root Protection Areas (RPAs) of T18 (Wellingtonia), T17 (Pine), & close enough to have a negative impact on the RPAs of T19 (Beech), T20 (Dawn Redwood), & G5 (Holly & Sycamore) state that the following measures will be taken to ensure the protection of existing trees prior to demolition and during construction. Where appropriate Arboricultural Method Statements will be prepared and will be agreed with the Council's Tree Protection Officer:

- Where excavation or construction is within or immediately adjacent to the root Protection Areas of trees, investigations will be undertaken to ascertain the exact location of tree roots; including ground penetrating radar and/or air-spade, soil-profile investigation techniques;
- A pre-demolition tree protection plan, schedules of tree works, and arboriculture method statement to BS 5837 : 2005 Trees in relation to construction and BS

- 3998 Recommendations for tree work will be prepared and submitted for approval;
- Mitigation of any unavoidable tree loss with equitable biomass replacement in the form of a combination of selected semi-mature specimen trees and younger trees. Further mitigation methods to be considered will include, pruning, root pruning, soil decompaction; amelioration of root soil profile, and other remedial or preventative work; and
  - Contract growing of selected specimen trees by an approved nursery until the time of replacement planting; and
  - A retaining wall will be constructed along the southern edge of the access road to ensure the existing ground level can be maintained thereby minimising disturbance to the tree roots. The form of construction and measures to promote tree root growth will be agreed with the Council's Tree Protection Officer.
  - The southern access road positioned as far northward as possible within the Parameter Plan zone to reduce impacts on tree roots along the southern site boundary;
  - The previously proposed lay-by/turning area in the south west corner of the site has been omitted to maximise the area available for tree protection/ planting;
  - Trees originally identified within the Arboricultural Assessment for removal have been reviewed and a number have now been retained. These are set out in the Addendum to the Arboricultural Assessment.

The trees at the perimeter of the site are the most important buffer between the College and the local residential properties on three sides of the site. The trees serve as a valuable screen in both auditory and visual terms. It is actually stated at both 4.7 and 11.5 of the submitted Arboricultural Impact Assessment that the intention is to prepare a management plan for the edge trees to increase their natural conservation value & ensure their longevity and continued screen. Not removing or compromising those trees mentioned above, and to ensure their protection throughout the development phases as with all other retained trees, should be a key pre-emptor to the longevity and future management of the sylvan edge of the site. The protection of the trees on site can be secured by the addition of suitable conditions to any consent.

From a landscape point of view the scheme is generally well thought through. Internal spaces are accessible and well connected is well located and should receive a high level of usage. Larger areas of open space would be at the northern part of the site. Tree removal must be phased in line with the overall phasing of the development and not clear felled from the start of construction – this can be controlled via condition.

### **Amenity**

The protection of the amenity of all those who may be affected by development is important. Policy EMP19 of the Local Plan permits development of educational establishments subject to the capacity of the site and environmental impact.

The current use on site is educational therefore although the use will be intensified it is very similar to the existing use. Therefore it is considered that there will not be a significant increase in the types of disturbance generated by the intended use of the site.

Some of the buildings on campus at present are generally situated much closer to the surrounding residential properties than those being proposed. It should be noted, in

particular, that at the rear of the site (Grove Walk) there are currently buildings between very close to the boundary (between 3.5m and 17m) and approximately 31m from rear windows and these house some of the most sensitive uses where building construction skills are taught. The distance to the nearest proposed building for these residents will increase to 80m. (i.e 52m-64m from the site boundary), albeit that the buildings will be taller. This will be a major improvement for many residents on Grove Walk.

On Cecil Road at present, in the worst case, the nearest accommodation block lies only 16m from rear windows (and 10m into the site) and this will increase to 35m. At the nearest point the proposed surface car park will be approximately 14m away from the boundary of properties on Grove Walk. The boundaries of properties along Ipswich Grove will be no nearer than 53m approximately.

The proposals involve constructing buildings that are could be considerably higher than many of those currently on the site. Therefore it is important that the green perimeter to the site should be maintained. This offers all the benefits of vegetation (biodiversity, reduced water run off, air filtration etc) but additionally it provides a screen that partially obscures the buildings from residential neighbours. The width of that perimeter zone will be at its widest where the buildings are tallest. It will be helpful to thicken the planting screen, especially where there are currently gaps, possibly with the addition of suitable species to provide a screen in winter when the deciduous trees have lost their leaves. The requirement improve screening can be secured through condition.

Some residential occupiers will have substantial improvements in their amenity because of the by the new development whereas others will be able to see buildings in a much closer location than they do at present. However, the impact on neighbouring residents by virtue of replacing the existing buildings with new buildings is broadly neutral overall. In no cases is it considered that the impact on a particular residential property is so harmful that could refusal of permission be justified.

In addition there is potential to improve the current residential amenity in the locality should the travel plan be successful implemented and should the number of car parking spaces be reduced as proposed. These proposals would result in a net decrease in the number of road users accessing the site, therefore noise disturbance and other on site impacts associated with vehicles on site should be improved to the benefit of neighbours.

Officers conclude that there is potential for some impacts upon some residents due to the increase of building heights however the increased buffer zone and the potential to secure improved landscaping would result in an acceptable development.

### **Sustainability**

There is clearly a desire on the part of the applicant to redevelop the campus site in a sustainable manner. The applicant proposes delivery of a sustainable, low carbon development campus to serve the needs of its staff and students. Many of the sustainable development proposals such as those for energy use are necessarily aspirational at this outline stage. The applicant aspires to achieve BREEAM rating "Excellent" and propose that this will be achieved through the implementation of energy, water, transport, sustainable construction and nature conservation initiatives.

The applicant is also committed to reducing their carbon footprint. A number of mitigation measures are proposed. These include selection of appropriate construction materials,

passive heating and cooling of the building through design measures and by reducing energy demand/use of renewable energy technologies. No commitment has been made yet but a number of renewable/low carbon energy heat source options have been suggested - combined Heat & Power, Ground Source Heat Pumps, Biomass Boiler or Condensing/High Efficiency Boilers. Other alternative and renewable energy sources are also being proposed as part of an energy strategy. These include solar water heating; solar photovoltaic's and wind generation.

Water consumption and water efficiency are identified as an important design consideration and a range of efficiency measures designed to minimise internal and external potable water consumption are referred to. Other options under consideration include grey water recycling and rainwater harvesting.

The principles provided include proposals to utilise Sustainable Drainage technologies such as porous paving and urban swales to reduce surface water run-off. This approach is consistent with the applicants aspiration to achieve BREEAM rating "Excellent". It should be noted that, according to the application form, the development will use the existing sewer infrastructure associated with the campus to which Anglian Water has raised no objection.

A waste management plan will be produced if consent is forthcoming. This will cover issues such as efficient use of resources during construction phases, e.g. the reuse and recycling of materials as well as plans to monitor and set reduction targets for operational waste - which will build on existing initiatives.

The sustainability techniques included in the development could be secured by condition in this or any future detailed future application.

## **CONCLUSION**

In terms of the principle of redevelopment of the site, the continued use of the present campus is as an appropriate way of addressing the future education needs for Norwich and the surrounding area. The wider need to provide first class education facilities for the benefit of the local population needs to be balanced against any harmful impacts upon the locality. The scale of the buildings would increase and that a number of trees would be lost should the development go ahead but the applicant has provided or has the potential to provide mitigation measures to reduce this impact and overall it is not considered there is a harmful impact on the local area that could justify refusal of planning permission.

The applicant has adequately addressed concerns relating to the design to reduce any travel, parking and highways impacts.

For the reasons given it is considered that application 08/00255/O would not result in an unacceptable impact on the locality, environment or lead to an unacceptable loss of amenity for those neighbouring the site. It would also have the positive benefits of improving site boundary planting, travel mode improvements, energy usage. It is therefore recommended that the application be approved.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

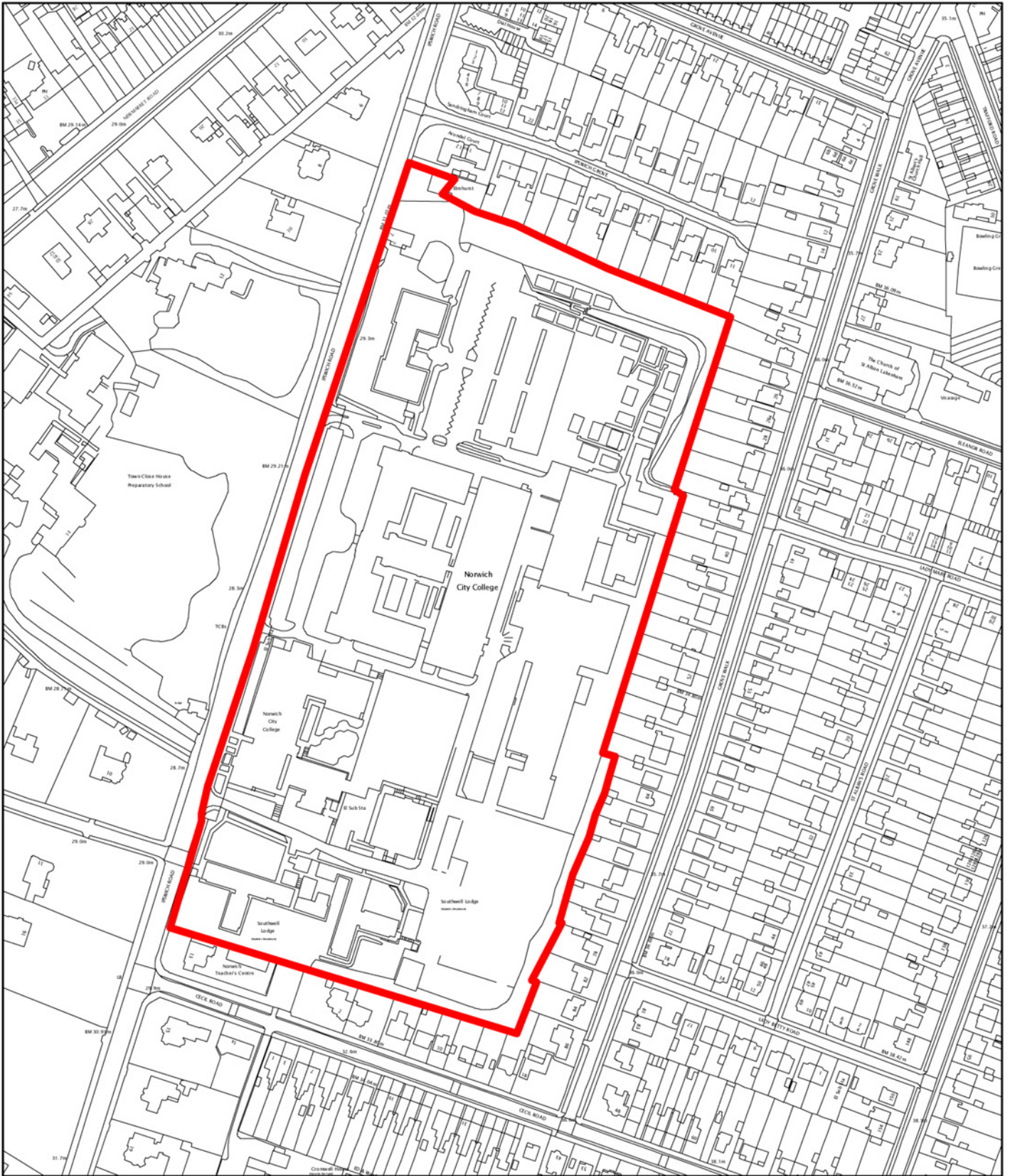


APPROVE PLANNING PERMISSION subject to the signing of a S106 agreement to include the matters detailed above and appropriate conditions including the following:

1. A detailed scheme for off-site highway improvements as indicated on the approved drawings;
2. Off site highway improvement works referred to in condition 1 shall be completed prior to first occupation;
3. Submission of travel plans;
4. Interim travel plans as detailed in condition 3 to be implemented prior to first occupation. Full travel plans to be submitted within the first year of operation and implemented;
5. Standard outline time limit;
6. Reserved matters shall relate to the Siting, Means of Access, Design, Landscaping and External Appearance;
7. Details of approved plans;
8. Submission of a development phasing plan to be agreed;
9. Phasing conditions to be agreed by officers;
10. Submission of a landscaping details, including all hard and soft treatments, also including lighting plans and the provision of offsite landscaping on highway land;
11. Landscaping to be maintained and any new trees/shrubs lost to be replaced;
12. Submission of an Arboricultural method statement;
13. Scheme for the provision and implementation of surface water drainage to be submitted;
14. Scheme for the provision and implementation of foul water drainage to be submitted;
15. Scheme for the provision and implementation of pollution control to be submitted;
16. All surface water from the car park to be passed through a petrol/oil interceptor;
17. Scheme to manage contamination to be submitted;
18. Scheme for water, energy and resource efficiency measures to be submitted;
19. Details for the provision of 10% of the sites energy from decentralised and renewable or low carbon sources;
20. Scheme for provision of sufficient capacity in the public sewerage system to meet the needs of the development to be submitted;
21. Details and specifications for all plant and machinery to be submitted;
22. Submission of a Waste management plan;
23. Submission of a servicing management plan, including details of proposed delivery times;
24. Submission of full details of cycle storage;
25. Submission of a fire strategy including details for the provision of fire hydrants;
26. Vehicular access to be constructed to Norfolk County Council Specification;
27. No gates shall be erected across the access unless otherwise agreed with the Local Planning Authority;
28. Servicing, turning areas to be provided prior to first occupation;
29. Scheme for drainage measures to prevent surface water run-off onto the highway;
30. Construction traffic management plan to be submitted;
31. Construction traffic is to comply with the details of the construction traffic management plan agreed;

**REASON FOR APPROVAL:**

The proposal would result in an appropriate and satisfactory form of development that would further enhance educational facilities at the City College Norwich. The buildings would relate well to surroundings and would enhance the visual amenities of the Campus. Subject to the legal agreement and having regard to the Travel Plan, the proposal would adequately address the transportation consequences. As such, the proposal would comply with Policies HBE12, EP18, EMP19, TRA6, TRA7 and TRA11 of the City of Norwich Replacement Local Plan Adopted Version, November 2004 and policies, E1, ENV7, ENG1, NR1 and SS2 of the East of England Plan, Adopted May 2008



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Planning Application No - 08/00255/O  
Site Address - Norwich City College  
Scale - 1:2800

Appendix 1a



**NORWICH**  
City Council

DIRECTORATE OF REGENERATION  
AND DEVELOPMENT

