

**Report to** Planning applications committee  
**Date** 10 October 2013  
**Report of** Head of planning services  
**Subject** 13/01356/F Garages Opposite Markham Tower Bowers Avenue Norwich

**Item**  
**5(3)**

## SUMMARY

<b>Description:</b>	Erection of 2 No. one bedroom dwellings and 4 No. two bedroom dwellings.
<b>Reason for consideration at Committee:</b>	City Council development
<b>Recommendation:</b>	Approve
<b>Ward:</b>	Mile Cross
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Tracy Armitage Senior Planner - Development 01603 212502
<b>Valid Date:</b>	23rd August 2013
<b>Applicant:</b>	Orwell Homes
<b>Agent:</b>	Rees Pryer Architects LLP

## INTRODUCTION

### The Site

#### Location and Context

1. The site consists of a group of twenty two garages located on the western side of Bowers Avenue. The garage court is located within a primarily residential area with two storey flats to the north, south and west. Facing the site on the eastern side of Bower Avenue is Markham Tower, an eleven storey block of flats. The local area is residential in nature, characterised by flats set within open plan green space.

#### Constraints

2. There are a number of mature trees adjacent to the western and southern boundary of the site.
3. An electricity sub-station is located in the NW corner of the site.

#### Topography

4. The site comprises an essentially level area of hard standing and garage structures

### Equality and Diversity Issues

There are no significant equality or diversity issues. The dwellings are designed to meet Lifetime Homes requirements.

## **The Proposal**

5. The proposal consists of the re-development of the site for affordable housing following the demolition of the existing garages. A single three storey block is proposed providing a total of six flats – 4x 2 bed and 2x 1 bed. Communal amenity space is proposed to the rear/ west of the block.
6. A communal parking area is proposed to the north of the residential block along with a secure compound for bin and cycle storage.

## **Representations Received**

7. Advertised on site and adjacent and neighbouring properties have been notified in writing. No letters of representation have been received.

## **Consultation Responses**

8. Norfolk Constabulary - Recommend revisions to boundary fences to improve security.
9. Environmental Health – A desk top investigation has been carried out to assess the risk of contamination of this garage site. The risk is considered low but further precautionary testing is recommended – this can be addressed through the imposition of a suitable planning condition.

# **ASSESSMENT OF PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

## **Relevant Planning Policies**

### **National Planning Policy Framework:**

Statement 4 - Promoting sustainable transport

Statement 6 - Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes

Statement 7 – Requiring good design

Statement 11 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

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

Policy 2 Promoting good design

Policy 3 Energy and Water

Policy 4 Housing delivery

Policy 12 The remainder of the Norwich urban area, including the fringe parishes

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

HBE 12 High quality of design in new development

EP1 Contaminated land and former landfill sites

EP16 Water conservation and sustainable drainage systems

EP18 Energy Efficiency in development

EP22 High standard of amenity for residential occupiers

HOU5 Accessible housing

HOU6 Development Requirements for Housing Proposals

HOU 13 Proposals for new housing development on other sites

TRA6 Parking standards

TRA7 Cycle parking standards

TRA8 Service provision

### **Other Material Considerations**

#### **Development Management Policies Development Plan Document – Pre-submission policies (April 2013).**

DM1 Sustainable development principles for Norwich  
DM2 Ensuring satisfactory living and working conditions  
DM3 Delivering high quality design  
DM4 Providing for renewable and low carbon energy  
DM8 Planning effectively for open space and recreation  
DM9 Safeguarding Norwich's heritage  
DM12 Ensuring well-planned housing development  
DM28 Encouraging sustainable travel  
DM 30 Access and highway safety  
DM31 car parking and serving

#### **Procedural Matters Relating to the Development Plan and the NPPF**

The Joint Core Strategy and Replacement Local Plan (RLP) have been adopted since the introduction of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act in 2004. With regard to paragraphs 211 and 215-216 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), both sets of policies have been subjected to a test of compliance with the NPPF. Both the 2011 JCS policies and the 2004 RLP policies above are considered to be compliant with the NPPF. The Council has also reached submission stage of the emerging new Local Plan policies, and considers most of these to be wholly consistent with the NPPF. Weight must be given to the emerging Local Plan and relevant policies are listed below for context although none change the thrust of the current Local Plan policies discussed in the main body of this report:

Emerging policies of the forthcoming new Local Plan (submission document for examination, April 2013):

#### **Key matters for consideration**

- Principle of residential development of this site
- Suitability of the site for residential development
- Design considerations
- Amenity considerations for future and adjoining residents
- Impact on the adjoining tree.

#### **Principle of Development - Policy Considerations**

10. Approximately half of the garages are subject to current lease arrangements.

Alternative garages available in the immediate vicinity are to be offered to existing garage tenants. The site has had no prior commercial use and is located within a primarily residential area, subject to no specific policy designations.

11. This previously developed site is in an accessible location, within the urban area and in an area of existing housing. The principle of development is therefore in accordance with the objectives of National and Local Policy which promote sustainable housing growth and JCS Policy 12 which encourages neighbourhood based renewal. The proposal will deliver six one and two bedroom homes and contribute towards meeting identified housing need in the city.

### **Design and amenity**

12. The site is considered suitable for the scale of residential developed proposed and the layout allows for both landscaping on the street frontage and communal amenity space to the rear. The siting of the residential block seeks to maximise interface distances between the proposed building and adjacent properties and optimise outlook for future occupiers. This siting combined with careful positioning of windows minimises overlooking and secures a reasonable level of privacy for existing residents and future occupiers.
13. The three storey building makes efficient use of the space available and is of an appropriate scale given the proximity of both two storey development and Markham Towers. A simple contemporary design approach is proposed with combines traditional materials with varied roof forms, large windows and areas of wood cladding. The design of the development is such that it will positively contribute to the residential character of the area.

### **Impact on trees**

14. The scheme seeks to ensure that the trees adjoining the site are not affected by the development and their retention will substantially soften the visual impact of the new dwellings and provide an attractive backdrop to the new flats. The new planted/ grass area to the south of the development will significantly enhance the landscaping setting of the two existing Silver Birch trees. Planning conditions will be necessary to ensure the adequate protection of these trees during the construction period.

### **Sustainability matters**

15. The design approach has been guided by sustainable development principles and seeks to minimise energy needs both during construction and by residents, long term. The building is designed to meet level 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes and will be highly insulated. The approach ensures that materials and construction methods used are A/A+ rated by the Green Guide and that future energy and water needs are minimised. In addition a number of ecological enhancements are proposed including native grass, shrub planting and fruits trees.

### **Affordable housing**

16. On residential schemes of this scale, adopted policy requires that 20% of the dwellings are affordable. This scheme exceeds policy requirements and all of the flats will be made available by a registered provider at an affordable rent. The Norwich area has an identified need for new affordable housing with 677 affordable homes needing to be developed in Norwich each year and this development will contribute towards meeting this target. The promotion of this council owned site has been discussed with Orbit Housing Association who have committed to the whole site being affordable housing in perpetuity secured through a covenant in the contract for the sale. They have indicated however that to attract the HCA grant required to make the scheme eligible and viable for development, that they would require the use of affordable rents. Orbit have indicated that the rent difference between social and affordable rents will be negligible and the houses will average about 75% of the lower 30th percentile of market rent. Given that the site will be 100% affordable the proposed tenure is considered to be acceptable.

### **Parking and servicing**

17. Communal parking on a 1:1 basis is proposed on site. The parking area is located to the north of the residential block and will enabled continued access to the electricity sub-station. A new vehicular access is proposed on to Bowers Avenue and the parking area provides adequate space for manoeuvring, enabling cars to exit in forward gear.
18. Secure communal cycle parking is proposed accessible from both the rear amenity space and the car park. The local Highway Authority is satisfied with this provision.
19. A communal bin compound is proposed consisting of space for one 1100litre non-recyclable waste bin, plus 3 no. 360litre recycling waste bins. The location and access arrangements are considered satisfactory.

### **Local Finance Considerations**

20. Under Section 143 of the Localism Act the council is required to consider the impact on local finances. It is a material consideration when assessing this application. The benefits from the finance contributions for the council however must be weighed against the above planning issues. In this case the financial considerations are relatively limited and therefore limited weight should be given to them.

<b>Financial Liability</b>	<b>Liable?</b>	<b>Amount</b>
New Homes Bonus	Yes	Based on council tax band. Payment of one monthly council tax amount per year for six years + affordable housing premium
Council Tax	Yes	Band not yet known
Community Infrastructure Levy	Yes – Social Housing Relief available.	Nil
Business Rates	No	-

### **Conclusions**

21. It is considered that the garaging is not currently providing an effective use of land and that the proposed development will deliver significant benefit in terms of delivering new affordable homes and urban renewal. The design layout is considered acceptable with a good relationship between public and private realm. Access, parking and servicing arrangements are also considered to be appropriate as are the amenity standards for existing and proposed dwellings. The development also responds to site constraints in terms of their implications for trees, energy efficiency and contamination. Subject to the conditions listed the proposals are considered to be acceptable and will provide for much needed housing development in this part of the City.

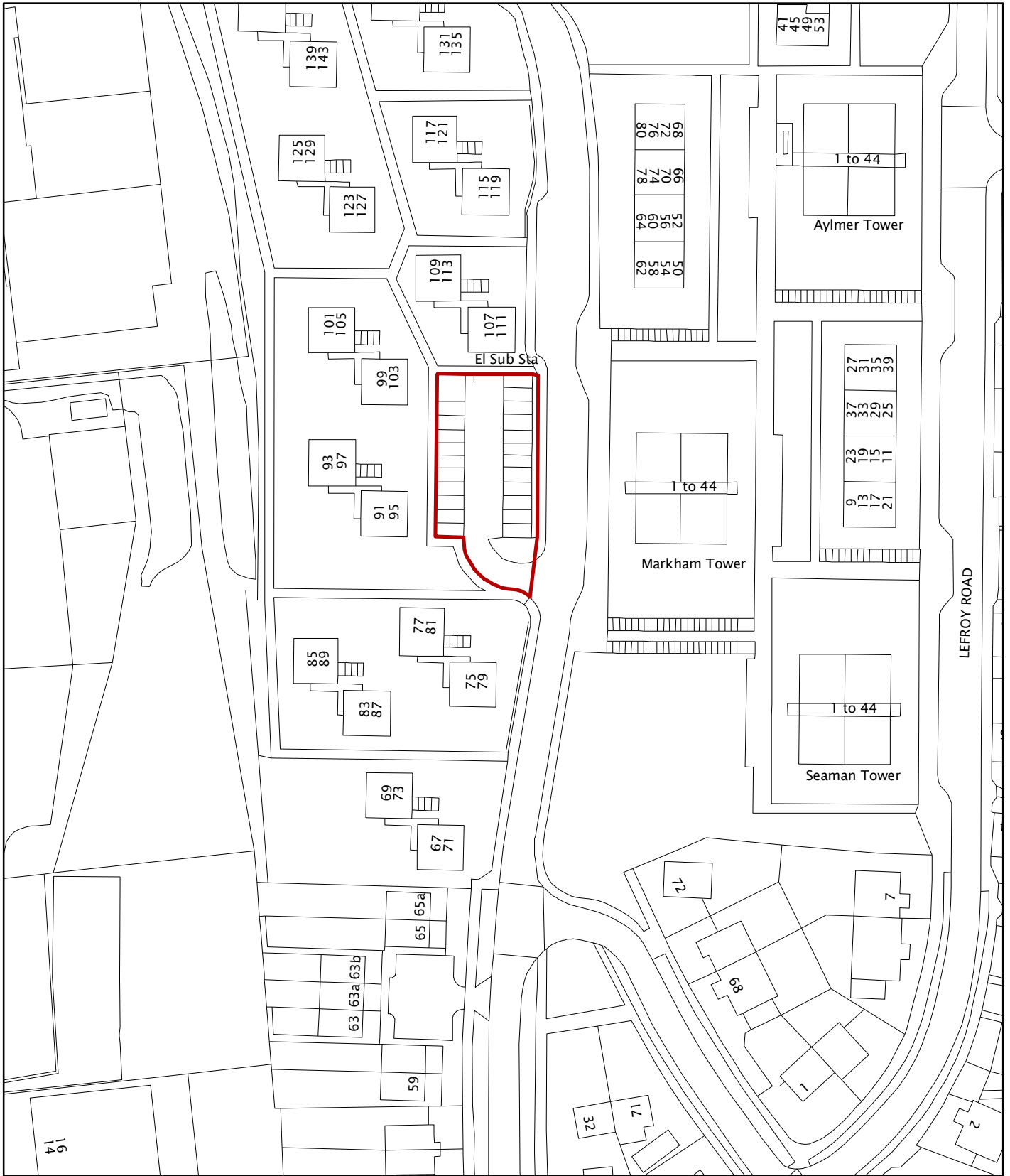
## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

To approve Application 13/01356/F Garages opp. Markham Tower, Bowers Avenue and grant planning permission, subject to the following conditions:-

1. Commencement of development within 3 years from the date of approval;
2. Development to be in accordance with drawings and details
3. Details of facing and roofing materials; joinery; boundary treatments, walls and fences; external lighting;
4. Details of hard and soft landscaping, planting, biodiversity enhancements.
5. Details of tree protection measures/provision and retention
6. Method statement for the construction of fence within root protection zone.
7. Development to be implemented in accordance with the recommendations set out in section 5 of the Ecological survey and pre-assessment survey ref:2013/109
8. Details and provision of on-site car parking
9. Details and provision of cycle parking/bin storage
10. Implementation of sustainability measure/energy efficiency measures as outlined in Design and Access Statement
11. Site contamination conditions
12. Control on imported materials

### Article 31(1)(cc) Statement

The local planning authority in making its decision has had due regard to paragraph 187 of the National Planning Policy Framework as well as the development plan, national planning policy and other material considerations and has approved the application subject to appropriate conditions and for the reasons outlined in the committee report.



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Planning Application No 13/01356/F  
 Site Address Garages opposite Markham Tower,  
 Bowers Avenue  
 Scale 1:1,000



**NORWICH**  
 City Council

PLANNING SERVICES

