

Report for Resolution

Report to Planning Applications Committee
Date 20 September 2012
Report of Head of Planning Services
Subject 12/01448/U Norfolk House, Exchange Street, Norwich,
NR2 1DD

Item
5 (2)

SUMMARY

Description:	Change of use from offices (Class B1a) to higher education centre (Class D1).
Reason for consideration at Committee:	Objection
Recommendation:	Approve
Ward:	Mancroft
Contact Officer:	Rob Parkinson Senior Planning Officer 01603 212765
Valid Date:	13th July 2012
Applicant:	Mr S Mullineux, City College Norwich
Agent:	Mrs Margaret Shelley, Lanpro Services

INTRODUCTION

The Site

Location and Context

1. Norfolk House is the 1940s/50s 4-storey ivy-clad office red/brown brick building set back from the road on the west side of Exchange Street in the city centre, within a curtilage used for parking. Currently occupied by Royal Bank of Scotland, this is one of the more modern office blocks in the city centre and has a double-frontage, with the main entrance and vehicular access from Exchange Street, and a rear entrance on St John Maddermarket. The building actually contains two modest retail units at the ground floor on the north and south ends of the building's St John Maddermarket frontage; these are currently occupied by a hearing aid company (north) and body art shop (south). The application is for a change of use of the current office space only, and does not involve the loss of either retail unit.
2. The offices are surrounded by a mix of uses. Most immediately, actually within the car park, are offices for training charities at first and ground floor of a building enclosing the car park on its west boundary (the Charing Cross Centre). Also within the car park, on the north boundary, is an electricity substation. Immediately adjacent to Norfolk House, a small clinic adjoins the south elevation, also set back from the road (the Old Iron House, 26 Exchange Street - a listed building). Immediate neighbours on St John's Maddermarket are retailers (south) and the offices of Golden Lion House with a car park and garages adjacent to Norfolk House on the north elevation of the building. Within a recent housing development accessed from St Andrews Street, at Rumsey Wells Place, twelve flats adjoin the

Norfolk House car park area, to the north boundary.

3. There are a range of shops and cafes on both the same side of Exchange Street and the opposite (east) side of Exchange Street. There are further retailers to the north and south, with a restaurant to the south on Lobster Lane / St John Maddermarket and a public house to the north on St Andrews Street. At the northern end of St John Maddermarket are shops and cafes, with a church and graveyard opposite the rear entrance.
4. The City College Norwich already has a city centre teaching building at St Andrews House very close to the proposed site on St Andrews Street, only a couple of minute's walk north-east. St Andrews House provides the College's business and finance courses, with the remaining higher education needs currently provided at Ipswich Road. Next to St Andrews House, on St Georges Street, are the additional further- and higher- education sites of the Norwich University College of the Arts (NUCA).

Constraints

5. The site is within the City Centre conservation area and a secondary retail area, and is next to the strategic cycle network of St Andrews Street, with most of the city's cycle network routes meeting at St Andrew's Plain. The 4 no. Japanese Flowering Cherry trees at the front of the site are protected by their position in the conservation area to a status equivalent to a Tree Protection Order.

Topography and access

6. Exchange Street is a one-way street steeply-sloping downhill south-north, and the site's topography and relationship to its neighbours is dictated by the change in levels. The majority of the car parking is at the north end of the site which actually rises uphill from street level. This means the parking area becomes 1.5 storeys above the parking courtyard and ground floor flats of the Rumsey Wells Place houses.
7. In terms of access, deliveries are taken through a carriage arch on St Johns Maddermarket, whilst existing office staff arrive from Exchange Street as there are currently two points of barrier-controlled car access into the site at Exchange Street, at the north and south ends of the site, separated by four significant and mature trees and an area of parking along the street frontage.

Planning History

There is no relevant planning history concerning the use of Norfolk House. There is a current pending application for some works to the frontage trees, amounting to basic maintenance and general pruning to shape the canopies (ref 12/01658/TCA).

Equality and Diversity Issues

There are no significant equality or diversity issues and level access already exists into and throughout the building.

The Proposal

8. It is understood that RBS will soon vacate the offices, it being surplus to their demands, and City College Norwich propose to utilise the building as additional

teaching space for their higher education courses. In planning terms, there is no distinction between different educational ages within the D1 planning use classes, but the application is clear that this will serve only the Higher Education courses of the college, working in tandem to share facilities and resources with the existing St Andrews House centre. The college intends to provide all higher education classroom-based courses at Norfolk House and St Andrews House, with workshop-based training remaining at the Ipswich Road campus. Norfolk House contains 2,225 sq.m. of open-plan office space over 5 floors.

9. Although the college wishes to relocate classroom-type courses into the building, the floorplans and supporting documents show an 'open-plan study area' concept with large floorspaces intended for self-study rather than formal classrooms. Precise locations for rooms such as IT, libraries and each course are not yet known at this 'in-principle' design stage. There are no external works proposed in this application; if any works are proposed which may require planning permission, future applications would need to be submitted.
10. The College anticipates 450 students relocating from the Ipswich Road campus to use Norfolk House, in addition to the 150 currently using St Andrews House (600 in total using the 'city centre campus'), although numbers at any one time are likely to be lower given the nature of education; the college suggests only 40% (240 students at the two sites). There may be some future increase in numbers, subject to a Government review, but student numbers are not thought to be something needing to be controlled by planning in this highly accessible location. The College has proposed opening hours of 7:30am – 10pm Mon-Fri, and 7:30am – 6pm Saturdays, although courses would usually be delivered in office hours.
11. As the college hopes to provide a campus concept between Norfolk House and St Andrews House, some facilities will be shared between both sites. This will involve car parking, cycle stores, staff, library, IT and resources. The canteen is likely to remain at St Andrews House. Overall, it is thought likely to improve the quality of the college experience for higher education students. As a result, the college will gain more capacity to deliver Further Education at Ipswich Road, as part of gradual campus redevelopment.

Representations Received

12. Prior to submitting an application, the College undertook some local community consultation, sending leaflets with their proposals to 230 businesses and residents in the area and business groups in the wider community, as well as the City Centre Business Forum and Chamber of Commerce. The consultation allowed 21 days for a response and apparently none were received. A Statement of Community Involvement is available.
13. The formal application has been advertised on site and in the press. Adjacent and neighbouring properties have been notified in writing. 1 letter of support has been received from a large retailer in the vicinity, believing the proposals a good opportunity to help nurture city centre vitality and support retail, hospitality and public transport.
14. 1 letter of objection has been received, from the hearing aid clinic within the shop on St John Maddermarket, which is located directly below some of the proposed

teaching space. The objection raises concerns listed in the table below:

Issue Raised	Response
There will be increased noise and nuisance, which will conflict with the needs of a hearing aid centre to provide a quiet environment to test customers' hearing.	See paragraphs: 29-31, 47-50.
There will be increased traffic and parking problems.	See paragraphs 35-46.

Consultation Responses

- 15. Highways Authority** – No objection to the principle of the change of use. It is unlikely to have any greater transport impact than the existing office use, particularly as more of the trips generated will be outside peak hours. The site is in an accessible location, which is not only beneficial from a transport perspective, but also ensures that the facility is as accessible as possible to the widest range of people. Consequently, there is no need to provide highways improvements or transport contributions, provided that (i) a Travel Plan is developed with appropriate monitoring, (ii) cycle storage is greatly increased from that initially proposed on site, and (iii) car parking arrangements / quantity is reconsidered.
- 16. Environmental Health Officer** – There appears to be sufficient resistance to the transmission of sound from the upper floors to the ground floor businesses. A conventional school or classroom environment would likely generate noise levels in excess of those when building was to be used as offices, due to the nature of the proposed use. However, the proposed use as more of a study centre with a library, and use for tutorial work rather than traditional classrooms, is not likely to be any more problematic from a noise generation point of view. Therefore, the intended use is likely to be acceptable without the need for a formal noise assessment as the noise from the proposed use shouldn't realistically exceed those of the previous office use.

ASSESSMENT OF PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Relevant Planning Policies

National Planning Policy Framework:

Section 1 – Building a strong, competitive economy

Section 2 – Ensuring the vitality of town centres

Section 8 – Promoting healthy communities

Section 10 – Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change

Section 11 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Section 12 - Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

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

SS1 - Achieving Sustainable Development

SS6 – City and Town Centres

ENV6 - The Historic Environment

ENV7 - Quality in the Built Environment

WAT1 – Water Efficiency
WM6 - Waste Management in Development
ENG1 – Carbon Dioxide Emissions and Energy Performance
NR1 - Norwich Key Centre for Development and Change

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 5 – The economy
Policy 7 – Supporting communities
Policy 9 – Strategy for growth in the Norwich Policy Area
Policy 11 – Norwich City Centre

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

NE3 - Tree protection, control of cutting and lopping
NE9 - Comprehensive landscaping scheme and tree planting
HBE8 - Development in Conservation Areas
HBE9 – Development affecting Listed Buildings
HBE12 - High quality of design in new developments
EP10 – Noise protection between different uses
EP16 - Water conservation and sustainable drainage systems
EP18 - High standard of energy efficiency in new developments
EP22 - High standard of amenity for residential occupiers
TVA8 - Heritage interpretation
EMP3 – Protection of business units and land reserved for their development
EMP19 – Development of education and training establishments
TRA3 – Modal shift measures in support of NATS
TRA5 - Approach to design for vehicle movement and special needs
TRA6 - Parking standards - maxima
TRA7 - Cycle parking standards
TRA8 - Servicing provision
TRA12 – Travel Plans for employers and organisations in the city
TRA14 - Enhancement of the pedestrian environment and safe pedestrian routes

Supplementary Planning Documents and Guidance

City Centre Conservation Area Appraisal (September 2007)

Other Material considerations

Written Ministerial Statement: Planning for Growth March 2011
The Localism Act 2011 – s143 Local Finance Considerations

Principle of Development

Establishing the new education use

17. The National Planning Policy Framework gives strong support for promoting education facilities; Section 8 states: “The Government attaches great importance to ensuring that a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. Local planning authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, and to development that will widen choice in education.”

18. Unlike offices though, the National Planning Policy Framework does not classify education uses as 'main town centre uses' for location within the 'town centre first'. Nevertheless, there is an expectation for sustainable development to be promoted through long-term economic stimulus, relocation to accessible locations, and providing vibrant and viable city centres through promotion of a diverse range of uses.
19. The Joint Core Strategy promotes education development and the city centre as a location for that, through policy 7, which requires provision to be made for sufficient, appropriate and accessible education opportunities for both residents and non-residents, and advocates "promoting the 'learning city' role of Norwich by facilitating the enhancement of tertiary education facilities, including ... City College."
20. In terms of land uses, the Joint Core Strategy (policies 9 and 11) promotes the city centre as the main focus in the sub-region for retail, leisure and office development, but with educational development also adding to the vibrancy of the centre. The JCS also identifies Exchange Street as continuing to be within the main retail area, with a focus on retail and commercial development, and improvements to the public realm (to include enhanced green links).
21. The JCS (policy 5) also aims to promote access to skills, training and higher education and links to businesses as a means to strengthen the economy. JCS5 envisages the role of the city centre as being one which supports educational development and expansion of existing institutions, and states:
- "Opportunities for innovation, skills and training will be expanded through:
- facilitating the expansion of, and access to, vocational, further and higher education provision;
 - encouraging links between training/ education provision and relevant business concentrations including co-location where appropriate."
22. Norfolk House is not only considered to be more accessible for greater numbers of residents in Norwich and beyond, but also to be suitably located to improve links with the business community and existing educational facilities. Alongside NUCA and St Andrews House, this part of the city centre could be described as the city centre 'College Quarter'.
23. Within the Replacement Local Plan, policy EMP19 also supports the in-principle expansion of the city college in the city centre, particularly in the supporting text (subject to the sites proposed being suitable on their own merits).

Loss of office space

24. Loss of office space, particularly office space still in use and in such accessible modern buildings and at such a quantity of floorspace, is resisted in the development plan (Replacement Local Plan policy EMP3 and Joint Core Strategy policy 5). This would especially be the case when concerning such a sustainable location as Norfolk House where continued office use would be sequentially-preferable to other uses. Loss of office use goes against the policy objective to provide at least 100,000 sq.m. of new high quality office floorspace in the city centre by 2026 (Joint Core Strategy policy 11).
25. The applicant has not sought to justify the loss of the office space by explaining

whether it would be appropriate for re-let or subdivision to smaller offices, for example, believing the new proposed use to be sufficient justification in itself. This is regrettable, as Local Plan policy EMP3 does require applicants to set out their explanation for the potential re-use or loss of existing office space. However, the site is known to have been marketed for re-use, and there is overriding support within policy for such educational premises to be made available in the city centre, so the applicant's stance is accepted in this circumstance. JCS policies 5 and 7, in terms of both general support for educational development and their co-location close to other educational facilities, and Replacement Local Plan policy EMP 19, are considered *in this instance*, to offer sufficient grounds to outweigh the concerns over the loss of office space, so on balance the loss of office space can be accepted.

26. Overall, the merits of the proposed use and the opportunity it provides for increasing the vitality and viability of the city centre are considered sufficient to outweigh the loss of the existing use.

Other Material Considerations

27. The site also features within the draft Site Allocations Development Plan Document, which is currently subject to public consultation at the 'pre-submission' stage of the plan creation. Described as draft policy CC25, it proposes a priority for mixed-use redevelopment of the site to include retail, leisure and office uses at ground floor, with a mix of residential and office uses at upper floors. However, in recognition of the potential value in retaining the existing building, the policy recognises the site's potential to be converted for educational activity as a complementary use for the city centre; doing so would also be required to include historic interpretation and improvements to the building's frontage and streetscape through a landscaping scheme.
28. Site Allocations Development Plan Document policies are currently at 'final public consultation', prior to being submitted to the Secretary of State for formal adoption, so the policy is only in draft form and very limited weight can be given to it at this stage. Nonetheless, the policy (if adopted as proposed) would not be compromised by this proposal, although conversion would be acceptable only if landscaping and heritage interpretation are provided. A conversion over the short-term would also not necessarily preclude future redevelopment of the site within the plan's expected life-span until 2016.

Impact on Neighbouring Premises

29. The adjacent residential premises to the north and north-east, and the businesses of the Charing Cross centre accessed from the car park, will all potentially be vulnerable to increased interest from students on campus, particularly if courses are taught more informally and staffing presence is lower. There is a genuine concern that the scheme itself does not allow for any common meeting space for students outside the building and that this might lead to students finding other nearby informal space, thus potentially disturbing nearby businesses and residents.
30. This concern could be mitigated through the design of an appropriate site landscape scheme for part of the current car park, which can be secured by conditions. The scheme would also be expected to rectify failing boundary treatments, provide appropriately located cycle and car parking, disabled spaces and pedestrian access routes, and include an area in front of the site which

improves the building setting and offers students “milling” space with reduced hazards of car movements (particularly if servicing is restricted to take place only from St John Maddermarket).

31. In recognition of the potential for classroom-style teaching, noisy activities and traffic movements to cause disturbance to residents and local businesses, a number of mitigating conditions are proposed on any prospective permission.

Design and landscaping

32. There will be no impact on the design, appearance or exterior of the building through this change of use, nor on the listed buildings adjacent or in close proximity. However, as mentioned above, it is considered that the scheme will require a revised arrangement of its external space layout in order for the building to function safely and effectively under its new use. This would reduce the existing dominance of the car parking area, and reduce potential nuisance to neighbouring uses, and improve the setting of the building and its relationship to the street scene and wider Conservation Area, as well as enhancing the quasi-public realm.
33. Being a prominent building on Exchange Street, and within the Conservation Area, it is a shame that the building currently lacks any particular setting. The Conservation Area Appraisal marks Norfolk House out as the only part of Exchange Street that doesn't have a positive street frontage and it is considered necessary to ensure there is a site layout and landscaping plan provided through the application; the new use should be afforded a high quality setting which should enhance the streetscape and the building's position in the Conservation Area. In doing so, the proposal would then provide improved amenity for students visiting the site as there is currently no external meeting space in the vicinity.

Heritage interpretation

34. Norfolk House is also quite notable for its modernist design merits and significance as a historic architectural asset for Norwich (having links to Sweden and the King family). As such it is considered important for the office use for which it was originally designed not to be forgotten through the change of use, by including a degree of heritage interpretation at the site. This need not be a formal commemoration but a mark that would also improve the 'identity' of the site and ownership felt by students, and offer some form of on-site recognition of the sites heritage value. Details will be agreed through conditions. Together with a revised site layout and frontage treatment, the scheme will provide improved landscaping to enhance the setting of the building and place in the streetscape.

Transport and Access

Transport Statement and Travel Plan

35. The transportation planner has reviewed the submitted documentation and agreed that peak-hour traffic demands will actually reduce, as the college's proposed learning format will mean use is spread across the day rather than conventional 9-5 office hours. The Transport Statement suggests only 75% of the attendees will travel during peak hours. Although overall car-based traffic may increase slightly (because students are old enough to drive and may need the resources at Norfolk House perhaps only sporadically), the peak hour demands are not going to be as

intensive as is the case for office users. As such, despite this being a fairly major development there will be no need for the nature of this use to attract planning obligations for sustainable transport improvements.

36. In transport terms this is a high transport demand use, and is naturally best located in the City Centre. The site is located in the most sequentially appropriate location to maximise modal shift and opportunities for linked trips.
37. A Travel Plan has been submitted outlining how Norfolk House will link into the existing sustainable travel promotional arrangements in place for St Andrews House. This will be further developed by a planning condition.

Vehicular Access and Servicing

38. Access will remain controlled by the in-situ barriers on Exchange Street. Deliveries and servicing will continue from St John Maddermarket where there is already a roller-shutter door, to be retained. Conditions will be used to ensure servicing takes place only from St John Maddermarket, in the interests of avoiding conflict with pedestrians on the narrow pavements, students milling around the curtilage, and the general flow of traffic along Exchange Street. Deliveries are not thought to be so frequent as to cause a problem to residential amenity.
39. Exchange Street is currently an access route through the city centre, although the adopted Norwich Area Transportation Strategy (NATS) identifies it as an eventual route for pedestrianisation, with access allowed only for residents and businesses.

Car Parking and Site Layout

40. An indicative site layout plan has been submitted in the Transport Statement. However, it is considered that this shows an excessive number of car parking spaces (19 cars), at the expense of any on-site landscaping / amenity space for staff and students and the potential to enhance the setting of the building, and only two disabled parking spaces. It is not thought appropriate to provide such a large number of car parking spaces, and doing so would be far in excess of Local Plan policy which expects parking to only be available for operational requirements such as servicing, not staff or students, other than for a quota of disabled spaces.
41. The application proposes to operate car parking in conjunction with St Andrews House, possibly on a permit basis. However, there are already considered to be an excessive number of spaces available at St Andrews House (32 cars and 5 disabled spaces, situated at the rear of the building and accessed from either St Georges Street or St Andrews Street), amounting to 32 spaces and 5 disabled spaces for 150 students/staff. Further, it is considered that layout and access arrangements at Norfolk House present much more potential for frequent car use to be disruptive to neighbours at Rumsey Wells Place and potentially hazardous for other users of the car park such as the offices, shops and other premises within Norfolk House or which are accessed from the car park. In addition, the movement of cars throughout the day will be far more frequent than the existing office use, and this could be disruptive and hazardous to pedestrians moving along and around Exchange Street. As such, it is considered that the scheme will only be acceptable if the curtilage is arranged to accommodate reduced levels of parking and revised access, in association with a formal landscaped space designed to influence student pedestrian movement around the site and enhance the buildings setting and street frontage. It is suggested that a condition is used to require such site layout and landscape modifications to make the development acceptable, and a car

park management plan will thereafter also be required by condition, once the final layout has been agreed.

42. The applicant has, however, resisted this suggestion, because the two site accesses are already orientated into a loop arrangement which prevents exit from the south and entrance from the north, and the applicant is concerned that adding turning areas into the layout would also be too difficult. However, although it would need to work around tree constraints, it is considered that there is an opportunity to rearrange the area for the benefit of improved safety and accessibility at the site. This opportunity is also recognised in the emerging development plan policy. A revised scheme should be provided by condition; I will report further on this issue within the update report for committee.

Cycle Access and Parking

43. A cycle share scheme already operates for students moving between the St Andrews and Ipswich Road sites, and this is proposed to be extended for Norfolk House also, as part of the Travel Plan. The St Andrews House site also has 40 cycle stands for students and staff; however, these are not secure, the stands are 'wheel-grabber' racks which do not generally encourage use, and they are not covered very effectively from the elements.
44. Unfortunately, cycle parking for students and staff arriving directly at Norfolk House has not been provided for adequately within the application; only 18 spaces are shown for the proposed 450 students and staff expected to use Norfolk House (albeit not likely to be at the same time). A theoretical Local Plan policy-compliant level of cycle storage would be to provide around 150 spaces (based on 15 classrooms of 30 students having access to 10 spaces each), but this is not an appropriate formula to apply in this situation where useage is far less formal. Cycle store policy criteria can be applied pragmatically in this instance; the College serves a far wider catchment than a school, more than half travel from more than 30 minutes away, 48% of users already arrive by bus, and only approximately 40% of students will be on campus at any one time. Bearing in mind the proximity of secure storage at St Andrews Car Park, and the (less-than-ideal) additional racks available at St Andrews House, it is possible to be more flexible in policy application.
45. Although travel patterns can justify reduced levels of on-site cycle storage, the provision should nevertheless expect such relocation into the city centre to make the college more attractive to more students, and become more widely accessed by cycle. It is necessary to provide more cycle store spaces, with numbers determined by what the site can accommodate as part of an overall layout rearrangement. There is ample room on site to provide much greater numbers; a revised site layout plan is expected to demonstrate a purpose-built secure and covered facility in the car park area accessible for students and staff, with additional occasional visitor hoop stands by the entrance.
46. Once again, the applicant has resisted this suggestion. The applicant has provided a transport statement based on the findings of a travel survey of staff at St Andrews House in July 2009, and surveys of students attending courses at St Andrews House in October 2011; the results found only 2% of students at St Andrews House cycled there. It is considered that the applicant places an unrealistic expectation on joint utilisation of facilities at the two college buildings, and its provision at Norfolk House as described above, doesn't seem to account for the likely increase in cycle use nor the current unsatisfactory storage at St Andrews House. Again it is

considered that this is a missed opportunity and I will report further on this issue within the update report for committee.

Environmental Issues

Noise

47. As has been mentioned in the introduction to the report, there are other office and retail occupiers in or adjoining Norfolk House, some of whom have a particular need for a quiet environment as in the case of the hearing aid shop at St John Maddermrket. The proposed use of Norfolk House as a study centre with library facilities for older more mature students should be acceptable, as the noise from the proposed use, and the characteristics of its particular learning format, should not realistically exceed those of the previous office use.
48. If the City College wish to undertake other "noisier" uses of the building such as use for functions, more conventional classroom activities, or even use by younger students, or use of noisy equipment, this is quite likely to cause increased noise levels (potentially significant) through to adjoining businesses (internally or externally). In the interests of preventing possible disturbance to residential amenity and adjoining businesses, conditions are considered necessary to (a) restrict the use to Higher Education study, so as to prevent other uses in the same use class which could be permitted development, and (b) restrict the internal layout and function to those shown on the submitted plans. Doing so would mean that any alternative proposals are covered by another application through variation of condition, in which a full noise assessment will be required from a competent acoustic consultant or engineer, and where necessary, the carrying out of an appropriate scheme to improve the sound insulation to reduce airborne and structure-borne transmission of sound into adjoining businesses.
49. In the event that the building is ever proposed for different styles or forms of education, enabling the building to provide suitable resistance to the transmission of structure-borne and airborne sound (Part E of the Building Regulations) should not be insurmountable, based on an understanding of the current sound transmission characteristics of the separation (structure) between the ground and first floors. Further sound insulation works may be required if the current acoustic separation between ground floor and first floor is insufficient.
50. Conditions will also be imposed to protect local residential amenity, including preventing any amplified music being played without the prior approval of amplification systems, and setting pre-established noise level limits, to prevent use of the premises for any teaching purposes generating noise above a specified level without prior agreement of their details.

Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy

51. In line with East of England Plan and Joint Core Strategy policy, the scheme is expected to provide at least 10% of its energy demands from a renewable and/or decentralised form of energy. However, being a change of use application, the precise details of the site's energy demand and possible measures are as yet unclear, particularly as the building is currently occupied and its structural capacity for micro-generation systems hasn't been easy to establish. It is entirely possible that sufficient measures can be included for on-site renewable energy, which can be secured by condition, although it is recognised that 10% energy should be a target rather than a stipulation given the possible constraints of the existing

building.

52. It is not considered likely for the renewable energy system to have a detrimental effect on the appearance and setting of the conservation area, or local residential amenity; for example, the roof forms and areas at the rear appear to provide sufficient screening.

Water Conservation

53. To be able to meet the expectations of Joint Core Strategy policy, the College will need to demonstrate improved water efficiency, as part of a scheme to be required by condition.

Plant

54. Any plant and machinery to be installed at the site will need to be approved by planning condition, to ensure the preservation of business and residential amenity in the area.

Lighting and CCTV

55. Any lighting and CCTV proposed to be installed, whether as part of the site landscaping scheme or subsequent security measures, will also need prior approval through condition.

Trees and Landscaping

Impact on Trees

56. The immediate application for a change of use will not have an impact on the four protected cherry trees within the Exchange Street street frontage. However, as part of a landscaping scheme, there will be an expectation for all hard landscaping works to be accompanied by tree protection method statements, to be secured by planning condition.

Local Finance Considerations

57. The Council would experience a loss of income from business rates from the loss of such a large quantum of office floorspace in the city centre, but the wider benefits to the city centre from the large number of students being based in the centre is thought likely to be significant, improving the vitality and viability of the city centre overall.

Conclusions

58. Members will be aware of the strong national policy support for education, and the Government's urge for prompt decisions. Notwithstanding the loss of the fairly significant quantum of modern floorspace currently in B1(a) office use in the heart of the city centre, the site offers an appropriate and highly sustainable location for the educational facility, which at the local level is considered complementary to main city centre uses. The overall principle of providing this use in the city centre is supported and this appears an appropriate means of improving the educational offer of the city centre in a suitable, sustainable location.
59. The proposals will offer a branch of the City College Norwich which will be of significant benefit to the learning environment of higher education students, and facilitate reorganisation of the existing campus on Ipswich Road. Being in close

proximity to the existing college facility at St Andrew's House, Norfolk House will provide students with a more accessible location which isn't car-dependent and which is not considered likely to increase local traffic given its wider 'peak hour' useage, but which is thought likely to facilitate more expenditure in city centre business and retail.

60. Members will have noted several areas where the application is not considered wholly satisfactory to enable unreserved approval. Despite being advised of such requirements at pre-application stage, the applicant has not provided adequate cycle storage, is proposing an over-reliance on car parking above policy limits, and is not considered to be enhancing the setting of the building or providing outside communal space for students through a landscape / site layout scheme. These shortfalls are hoped to be resolved through conditions to modify the scheme.
61. Subject to the use of the planning conditions mentioned in the body of the report, including those relating to the need to provide improvements to cycle parking, student milling space and on-site landscaping, the applicant's proposed open study learning environment concept can be accepted.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended to Approve planning application 12/01448/U at Norfolk House, Exchange Street, Norwich, NR2 1DD, for the change of use from offices (Class B1a) to higher education centre (Class D1), subject to the following conditions:

1. Commencement within 3 years;
2. Use to be restricted to Higher Education, and not any other form of education;
3. Learning environment to be restricted to the open-study layout concept and layout as proposed in the submitted plans;
4. Remove permitted development right to prevent use in any other form of D1 Use Class;
5. Noise to not exceed a pre-determined level (to be confirmed by Environmental Health);
6. All deliveries and servicing to take place from St John Maddermarket;

Prior to commencement of use

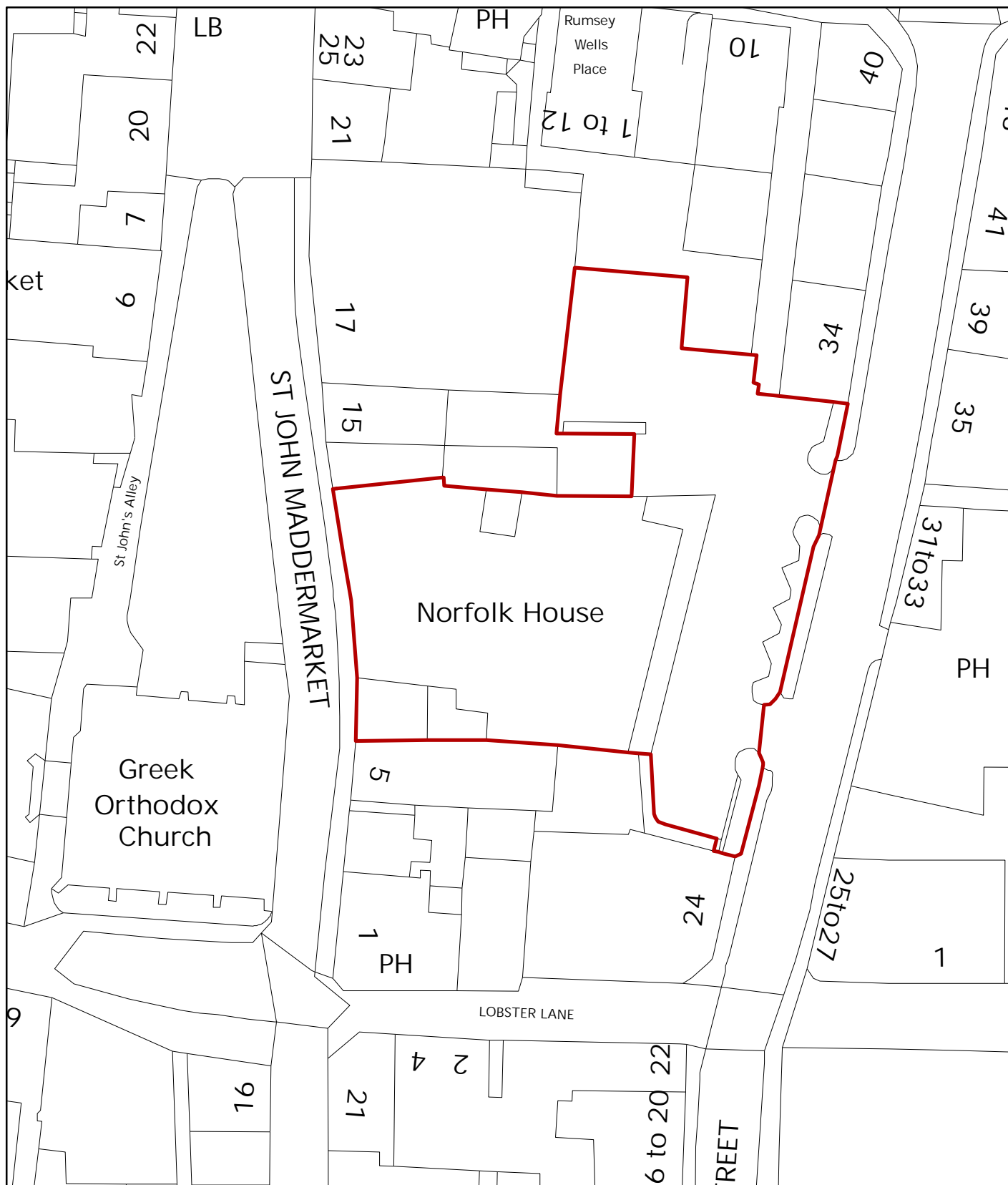
7. On-site renewable energy generation scheme to be agreed, sufficient to demonstrate at least 10% renewable energy generation, unless otherwise shown to be unfeasible, impractical or unviable, and implemented;
8. Water efficiency scheme proposals to be agreed and implemented;
9. Site layout plan to be agreed and implemented, to show a specific landscaped site entrance to enhance the setting of the building and improve the street frontage, providing safe pedestrian routes into the site, appropriate disabled car parking and car parking access, and increased levels of cycle parking storage within an appropriate location for a secure and covered facility;
10. Landscaping scheme details to be agreed and implemented, to include tree protection;
11. Boundary treatments to be agreed and implemented;
12. Travel Plan to be finalised and implemented;
13. Cycle parking storage facility design details to be agreed and store to be implemented;
14. Heritage interpretation details to be agreed and implemented;
15. Car parking management plan to be agreed and implemented;
16. No plant and/or machinery to be installed without prior approval of details;

17. No lighting and/or CCTV to be installed without prior approval of details.

Reasons for approval:

Notwithstanding the loss of office floorspace in the heart of the city centre, the site offers an appropriate and highly sustainable location for the educational facility, which is considered complementary to main city centre uses and an appropriate means of improving the educational offer of the city centre. The facility will benefit the learning environment of higher education students and bring improved vitality and diversity of uses to the city centre. Subject to conditions imposed to restrict activities to those proposed in the plans, and prevent use of other forms or ages of education, or other uses in the same use class, the open study learning environment concept is considered acceptable in terms of avoiding nuisance or noise for adjoining local businesses and residents, and will improve its environmental performance. Subject to conditions to agree a revised layout and landscaping plan, the new use should be afforded a high quality entrance setting which should enhance the street frontage and the building's position in the Conservation Area, whilst improving amenity of students, providing improved means of access, and minimising the potential disruption and hazards to pedestrians within and outside the site.

As such, the development is considered to meet the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework, policies SS1, SS6, ENV6, ENV7, WAT1, WM6, ENG1 and NR1 of the East of England Plan (2008), policies 2, 3, 5, 7, 9 and 11 of the adopted Joint Core Strategy for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk (2011), and saved policies NE3, NE9, HBE8, HBE9, HBE12, EP10, EP16, EP18, EP22, TVA8, EMP3, EMP19, TRA3, TRA5, TRA6, TRA7, TRA8, TRA12 and TRA14 of the City of Norwich Replacement Local Plan (2004), and all material considerations.



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Planning Application No 12/01448/U

Site Address Norfolk House, Exchange Street

Scale 1:500



NORWICH
City Council

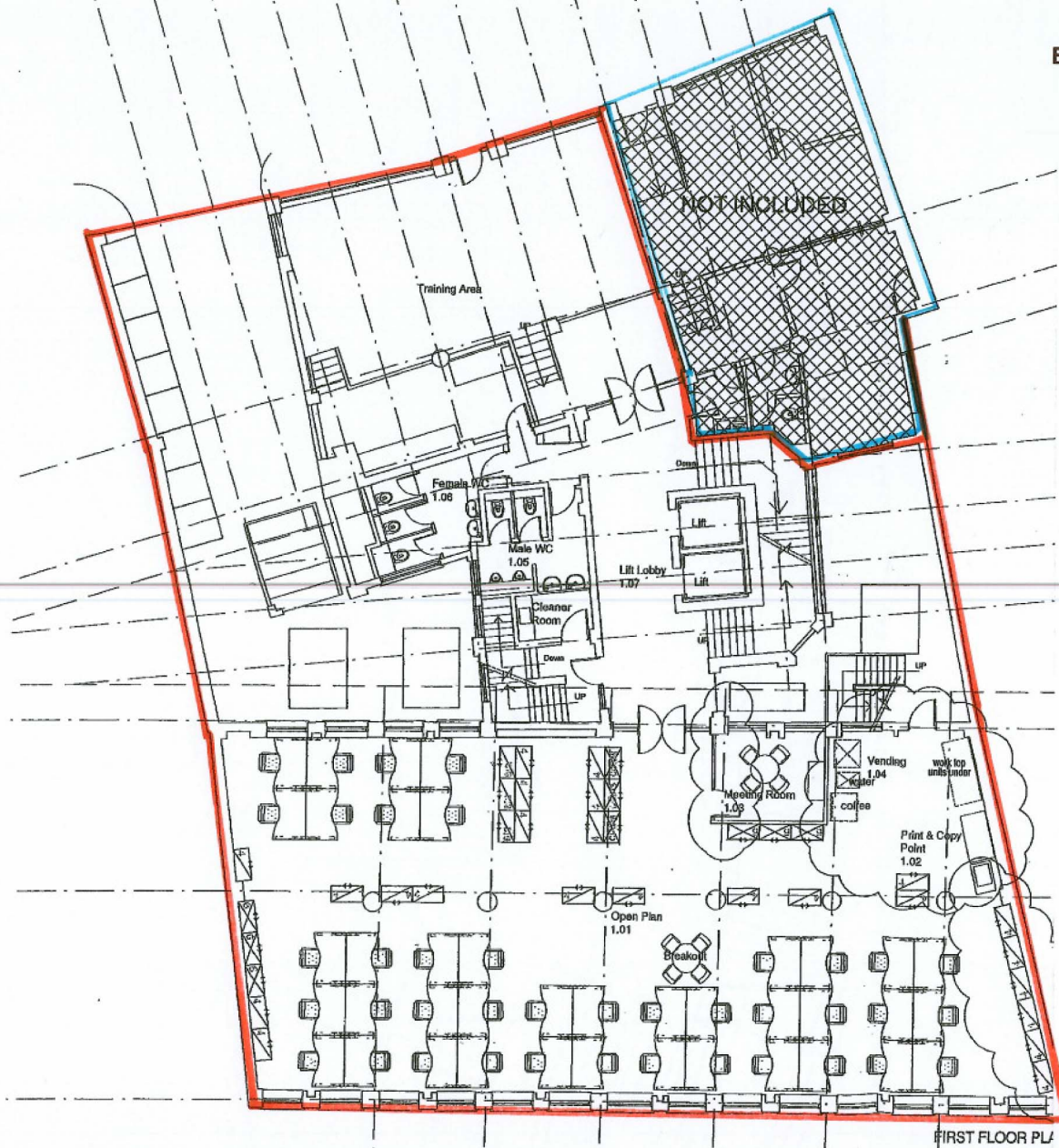
PLANNING SERVICES





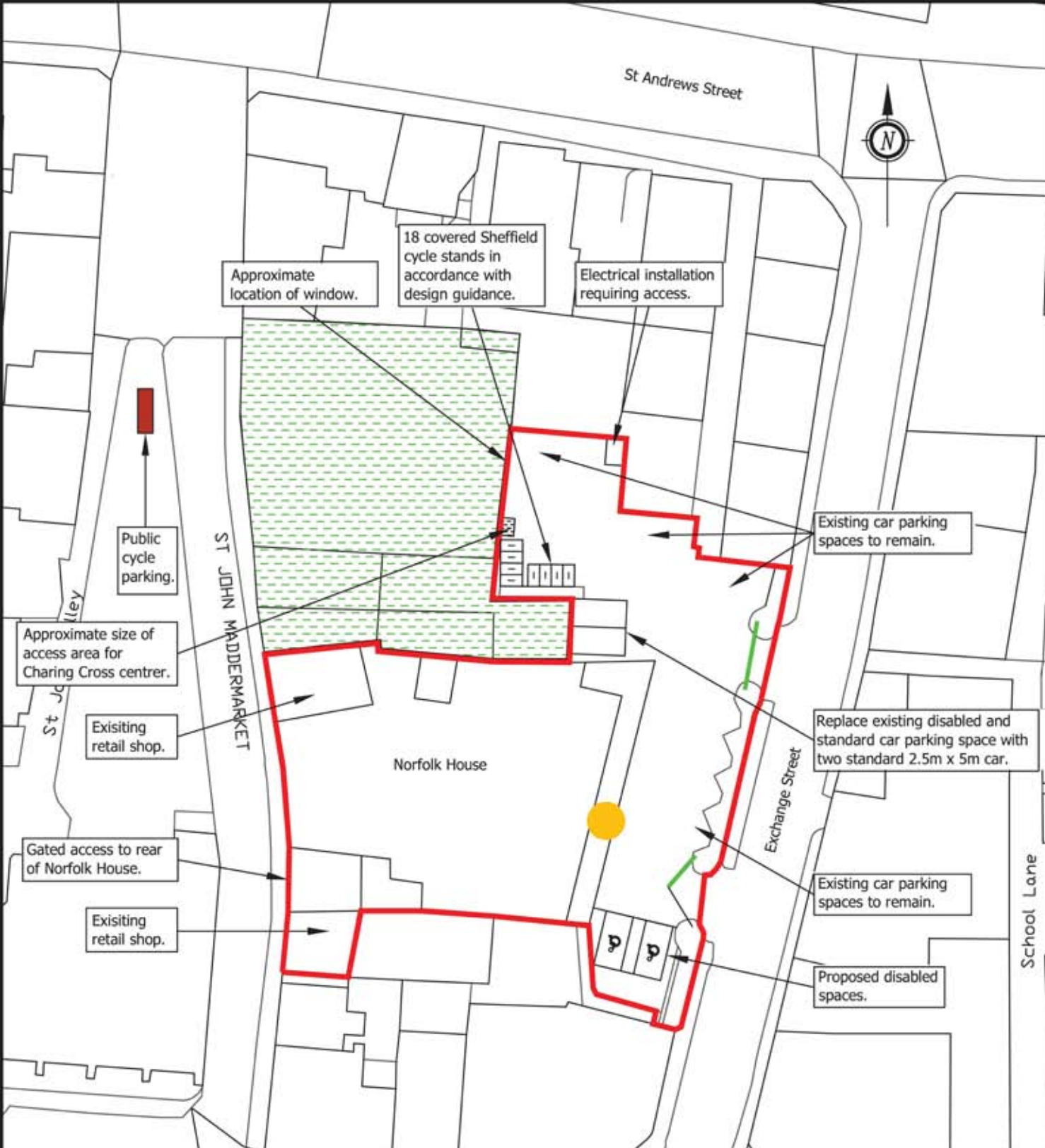
GROUND FLOOR PLAN

EXISTING FLOOR PLANS



Exchange Street

FIRST FLOOR PL



Key

Red line boundary

Main level access to Norfolk House

Electronic controlled barriers

Buildings with right of access via car park

Notes

- Based on OS Mapping.
- The provision of cycle stands subject to onsite survey and assessment
- Barrier positions and existing features within car park have been approximated.
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B	Client requests for layout update	TD	250612	MH
A	Update Parking Layout	TD	18.4.12	MH
Rev	Description	Dwn	Date	Chkd

KingdomTP

Saffron House, Lopham Road
East Harling, Norfolk NR16 2PX

mail@KingdomTP.co.uk
Telephone 01603 325587

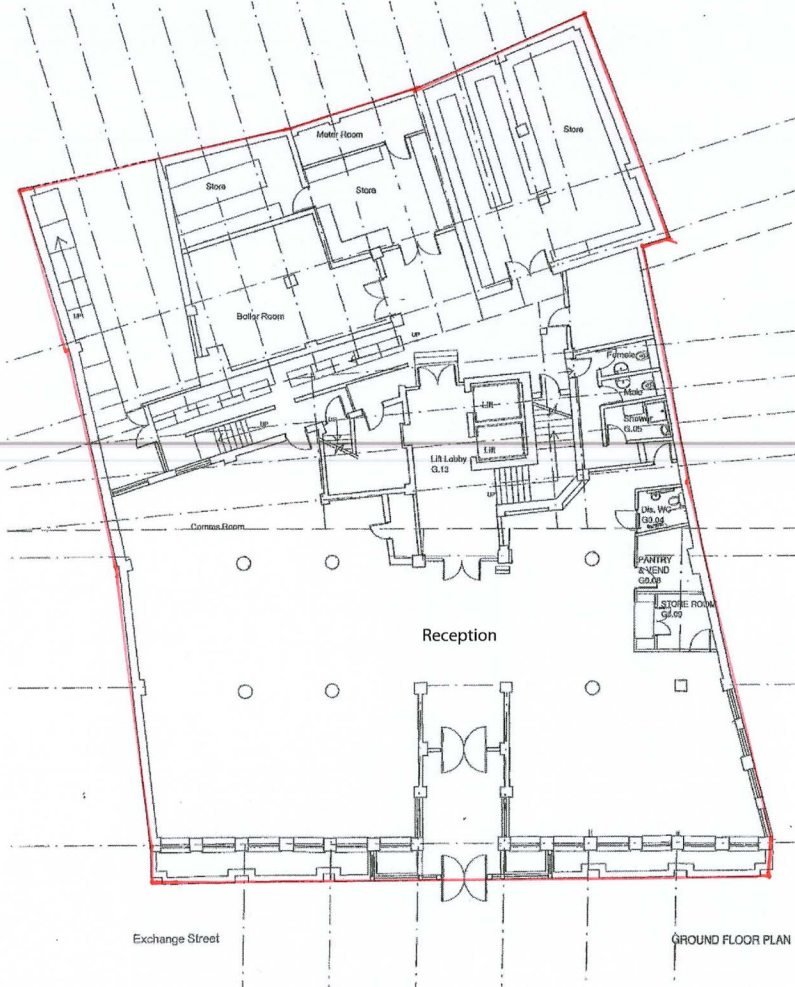
CLIENT
Norwich City College

PROJECT
Change In Use Planning Application for Norfolk House

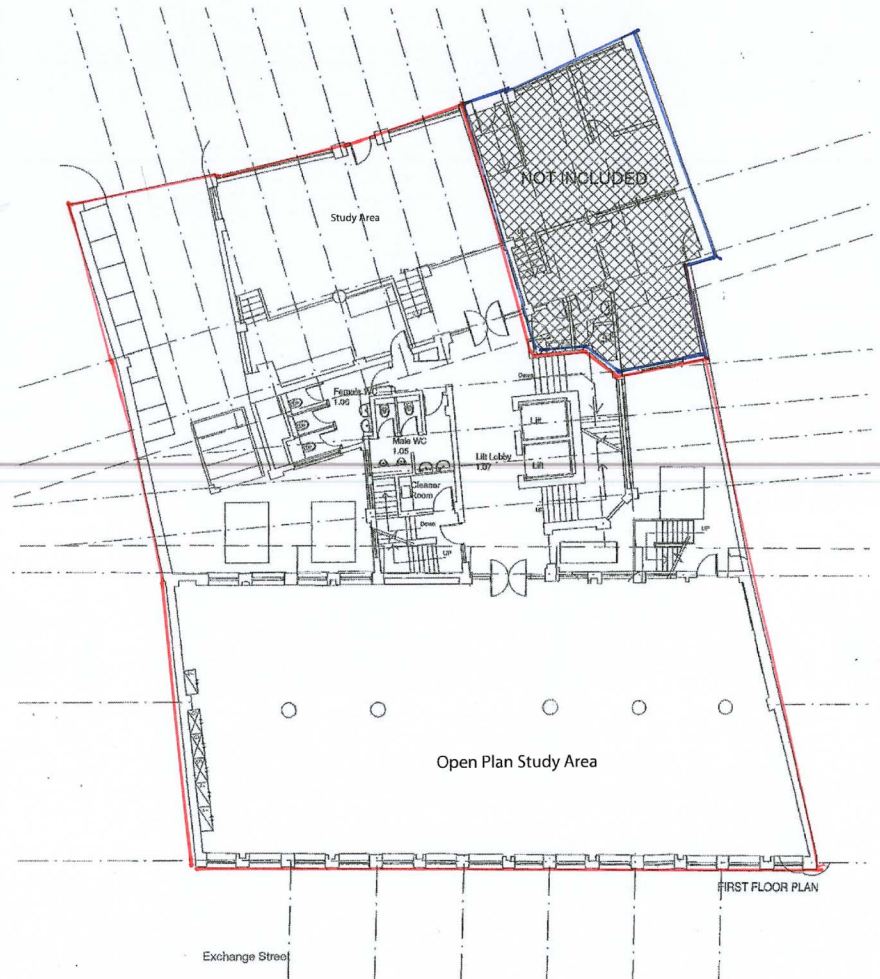
DRAWING TITLE
Plan 2 Proposed Site Layout

DRAWN MH	CHECKED BY TD	DATE 10.11.2011
SCALE 1:500	DRAWING NUMBER B10057/15/02	REVISION B

Ground Floor



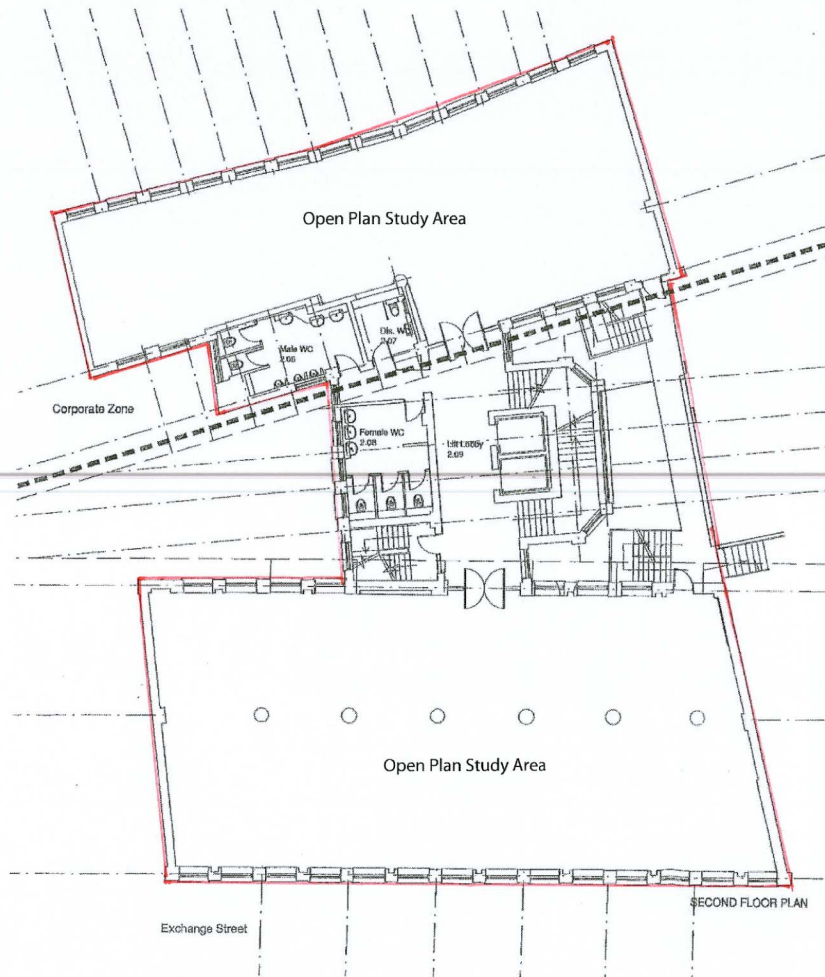
First Floor



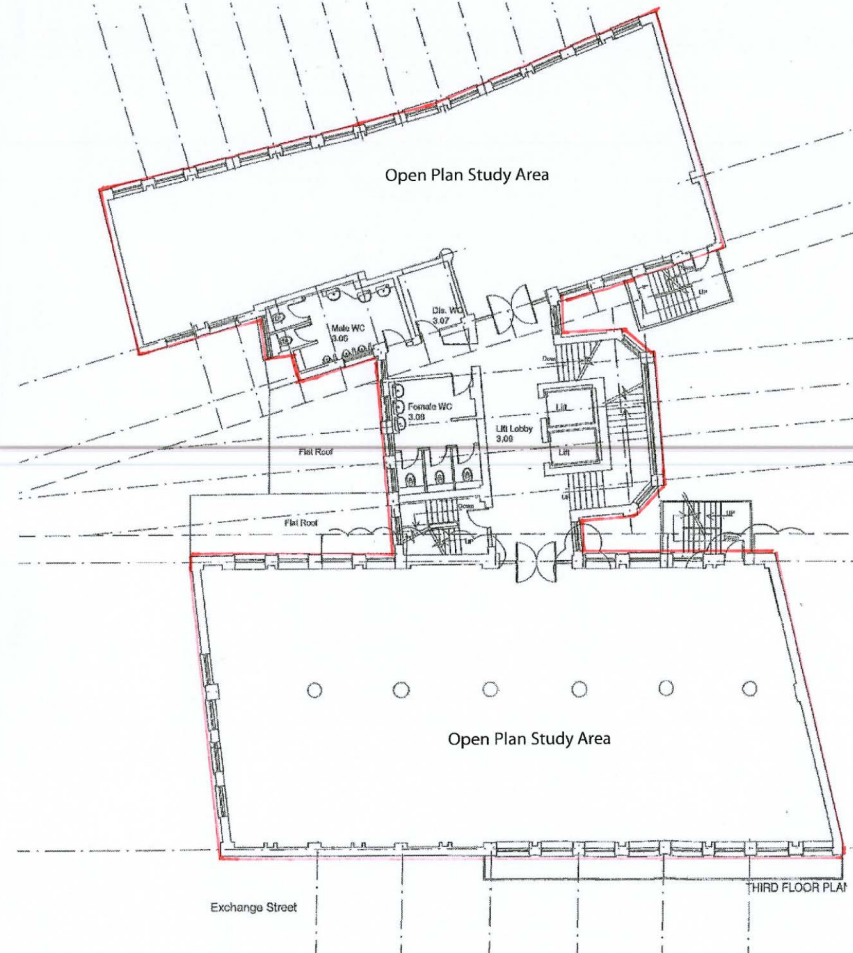
PROPOSED FLOOR PLANS

0m 10m
1:200 at A3

Second Floor



Third Floor



PROPOSED FLOOR PLANS

0m 10m
1:200 at A3