

**Report to:** Planning applications committee

**Item**

12 May 2016

**Report of:** Head of planning services

**Subject:** Application no 15/01646/F - Bartram Mowers Ltd,  
Bluebell Road, Norwich, NR4 7LG

**Reason  
for referral** Objection

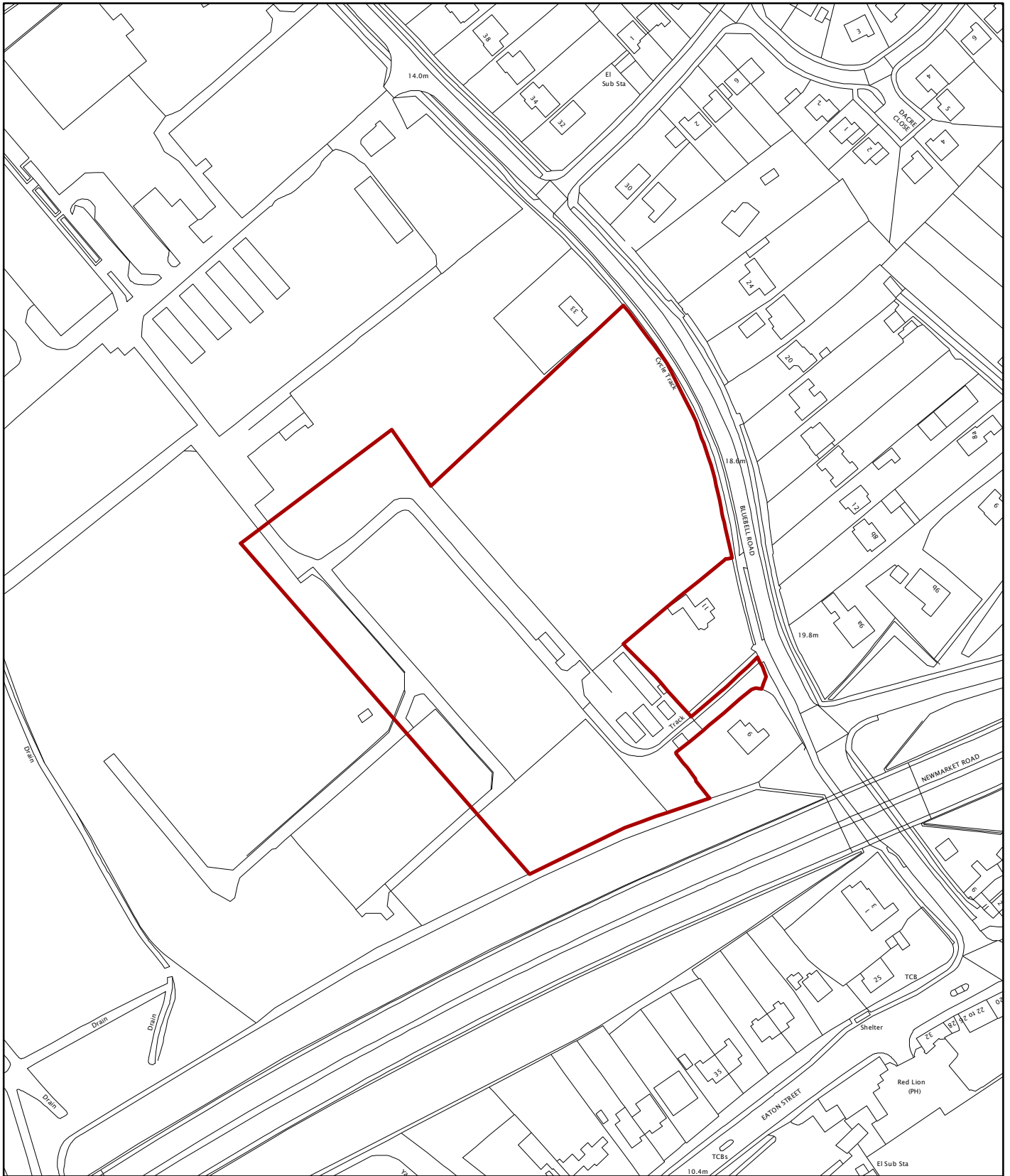
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<b>Ward:</b>	Eaton
<b>Case officer</b>	Steve Fraser-Lim - <a href="mailto:stevefraser-lim@norwich.gov.uk">stevefraser-lim@norwich.gov.uk</a>

Development proposal		
Erection of 62 age restricted retirement (including affordable) apartments (class C3), assisted living extra care accommodation (arranged in the form of 57 units, class C2), access, car parking, landscaping and ancillary development (revised proposals: Revisions include omission of vehicle access point, reduction in height of some buildings, new footpath links).		
Representations		
Object	Comment	Support
56	7	12

Main issues	Key considerations
1	Principle of development, including nature of housing proposed and affordable housing
2	Design / Landscape
3	Transport
4	Open space / biodiversity issues
<b>Expiry date</b>	20 May 2016
<b>Recommendation</b>	Approve subject to S106 legal agreement



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Planning Application No 15/01646/F

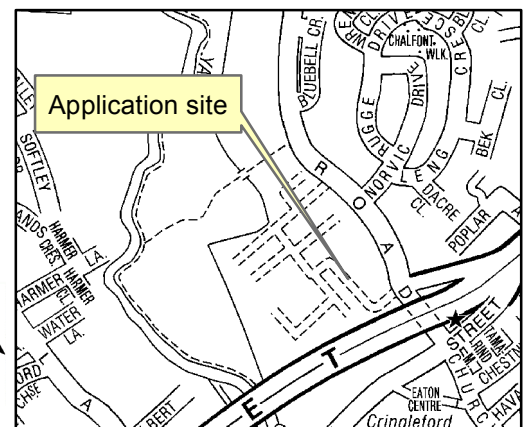
Site Address Bartram Mowers  
Bluebell Road

Scale 1:2,000



**NORWICH**  
City Council

PLANNING SERVICES



## The site and surroundings

1. The site is situated on the south west side of Bluebell Road and comprises predominantly grassed areas formerly accommodating agricultural greenhouses and a single storey retail building used for sale of lawn mowers, with associated access road and car parking area. The site also includes a single storey temporary building in use as a nursey and a line of Beech trees which are subject to a Tree Preservation Order which enclose a grassed area adjacent to Bluebell Road.
2. The character of the wider area is heavily influenced by the Yare Valley to the south west, as the topography slopes down from Bluebell Road toward the River. The site is adjoined by large areas of woodland / field grazing area open space forming part of the Yare Valley to the south west and north. An embankment accommodating the A11 adjoins to the south. The opposite side of Bluebell Road to the east has a more suburban character with large detached houses at a higher ground level than the application site.

## Constraints

3. The site includes a group of TPO trees. The site adjoins the Yare Valley Character Area, an area of designated open space, and is approximately 40m from a County Wildlife Site (CWS) which is adjacent to the river Yare. Ground levels across the site fall from a highpoint adjacent to Bluebell Road down towards the river.

## Relevant planning history

4.

Ref	Proposal	Decision	Date
05/00170/F	Construction of 4 no. retail units with covered walkways, including link to existing unit (amendment to previous permission no. 4800544/F erection of 5 no. buildings for display and sale of leisure goods).	Withdrawn	12/09/2005
08/00313/F	Use of land for the standing and display of temporary garden buildings.	Approved	25/06/2008
13/00852/U	Change of use of temporary building from retail (Class A1) to children's nursery (Class D1) for a period of two years.	Approved	12/09/2013

Ref	Proposal	Decision	Date
15/01839/F	Retrospective change of use from Retail (Class A1) to Children's Nursery (Class D1) including retention of associated alterations with provision of formalised car parking area and boundary planting.	Approved	29/02/2016

## The proposal

5. The proposals comprise 62 age restricted retirement (including affordable) apartments (class C3), assisted living extra care accommodation (class C2), access, car parking, landscaping and ancillary development. The proposals are arranged within three buildings, accessed from a new vehicle access from Bluebell Road, with a secondary emergency only access also proposed.
6. The scale and massing of the proposed blocks have been configured to take account of the topography across the site and reduce their prominence within the wider landscape when viewed from Bluebell Road. 42 Retirement living units (class C3) are proposed within a part 2, part 3 storey, U shaped block adjacent to Bluebell Road. A part 3, part 2 storey linear shaped block comprising 6083 sq.m. of extra care accommodation, arranged in the format of 57 units, with associated communal space is proposed at the south western area of the site closest to the river. A two storey block of 20 age restricted affordable housing flats is situated on the southern area of the site and accessed via the main access road proposed as part of the development.
7. The proposals have been revised following consultation responses to the first round of public consultation. The revisions comprise the following changes: access arrangements have been reconfigured and one of the accesses has been downgraded to a footpath capable of being used by emergency vehicles only; the affordable block has been reconfigured to make the units larger; the amount of floorspace within the assisted living block has been reduced from 6,363sqm to 6,083sqm, (with an associated reduction in accommodation from 60 to 57 units) following a reduction in height of part of the block to two stories; a new footpath link and visual gap from Bluebell Road down to the Yare Valley has been introduced.

## Summary information

Proposal	Key facts
<b>Scale</b>	
Total no. of dwellings	62 dwellings (class C3) and 57 units within assisted living block (C3).
No. of affordable dwellings	20 Social rented units.
Total floorspace	Private residential units (class C3): 3948sqm Social rented residential units (class C3): 1521sqm Assisted living, extra care (class C2): 6083sqm
No. of storeys	Part 2, part 3 stories
Max. dimensions	90m length, 32m depth, 14m height
Density	Approximately 60 dwellings per hectare
<b>Appearance</b>	
Materials	Bricks (two types), timber boarding, metal balcony balustrades,
Construction	Likely to be conventional block and brick construction
Energy and resource efficiency measures	Good insulation and air tightness, solar panels and air source heat pumps to generate on site renewable energy.
<b>Operation</b>	
Ancillary plant and equipment	Commercial kitchen, with associated extraction equipment.
<b>Transport matters</b>	
Vehicular access	Access via Bluebell Road
No of car parking spaces	68
No of cycle parking spaces	Cycle parking within buggy storage / charging area

## Representations

8. Advertised on site and in the press. Adjacent and neighbouring properties have been notified in writing both in connection with the original proposals and the revised plans. 75 letters of representation have been received citing the issues as summarised in the table below. All representations are available to view in full at <http://planning.norwich.gov.uk/online-applications/> by entering the application number.

Issues raised	Response
Three accesses into the site are excessive and would be dangerous for pedestrians and cyclists. It would also cause traffic to queue in Bluebell Road. Vehicle access into the emergency access should be controlled.	See main issue 3.
The proposed buildings (3 and 4 stories) are over-scaled and out of context with the Yare Valley surrounding area. They would also be visible from across the valley above existing trees and also from Strawberry Fields, thereby harming the character of the valley. Buildings should be limited to a single storey in height.	See main issue 2.
The proposed density of development is significantly in excess of that permitted by the local plan. The proposed density would also be in excess of the density of the surrounding area and would be excessively urban in character for this location.	See main issue 2.
No cycle parking proposed within the development.	See main issue 3.
The proposed architecture is brutalist and industrial in character with inappropriate materials. It is out of character with the surrounding area.	See main issue 2.
Flats are not suitable of over 55s as they will be isolated in their bedrooms and unable to access facilities on the ground floor.	See main issue 2.
The proposals would result in the displacement of flora and fauna.	See main issue 4.

Issues raised	Response
The site should not be developed, as development will harm the character of the Yare Valley and result in loss of open, green space.	See main issue 1.
The proposals will result in undue vehicle congestion along Bluebell Road.	See main issue 3.
Proposals will devalue house prices in the area.	This is not a material planning consideration.
The public consultation process undertaken by McCarthy Stone has been disingenuous and has misrepresented local people.	Concerns are noted. It is welcomed that the applicants have undertaken pre-application public consultation but the results of this do not significantly inform decision making. The Council has carried out its own statutory public consultation on the proposals.
The proposed car parking is insufficient to serve the needs of the development.	See main issue 3.
There should be a binding agreement to ensure use of the open space as a public amenity. The developer should also contribute to its upkeep. Excessive 'management' of this unspoilt open space will harm its character.	See main issue 4.
The proposed affordable housing block is segregated and ghettoized from the rest of the development.	See main issue 2.
Removal of the group of protected Beech trees in the centre of the site would significantly harm the character of the area.	See main issue 2.
It is not clear when the second phase of development will take place, so it is not clear when the delivery of open space adjacent to the development will take place if at all.	See main issue 4.

Issues raised	Response
There is a shortage of accommodation for over 55s in the area and the site is well suited to their needs as it is close to shops and public transport. Over 55's accommodation will help to release housing in the surrounding area to other families.	See main issue 1.
Interested in moving into the development.	This is not a material planning consideration, although is indicative of need for this type of accommodation in the city.
The height of the development would not be suitable for elderly occupants who will be isolated in their rooms and unable to get to the ground floor.	See other matters.

## Consultation responses

9. Consultation responses are summarised below the full responses are available to view at <http://planning.norwich.gov.uk/online-applications/> by entering the application number.

### Landscape design and conservation

10. Concerns were originally raised that the proposed layout and relating masterplan provided insufficient southeast and northwest connections, in particular with regard to the affordable housing block, as well as links between the site, Bluebell Road and the open space. The design of the main access road was considered to be problematic, featuring a road, verge with no clear pedestrian route through to the open space, and heavy thicket native planting. These features combined to block views through the site towards the valley, as well as failing to provide legible routes to the open space.
11. Concerns were also raised that the design approach was unduly urban with buildings to prominent in key views, particularly towards the areas of the site closest to the river valley. The height of buildings in key views should also be restricted to increased views of landscape and green links. Detailed landscaping also appeared to be unduly formal in placers and would benefit from a more naturalistic style.
12. The revised proposals have substantially addressed these concerns, although it is acknowledged that the layout / massing of the proposals in the form of three large buildings would be more prominent than other forms of development. In addition



outstanding comments with regard to the width of the access path to the river valley, the location of boundary treatments along this path and details of landscaping in order to appear sufficiently naturalistic will need to be addressed at the conditions stage. In relation to the masterplan proposals these have also been adjusted to respond to some of the issues identified, in particular in relation to the design strategy and principles. However we still have caution over accepting any commitment to the place making framework principle to terminate views with key focal buildings, as this could contradict with other objectives to minimise impact on important views and improving access. There is an acknowledgement within the masterplan brief that taller built form may not be appropriate around key green links between the site and wider landscape, but this is not expressed explicitly within the place making principles, therefore for clarity it should be. The suitability of all the design principles will of course be subject to testing them with detailed design.

## **Transport**

13. No objections to both the original and revised proposals. The proposed development is suitable in transportation terms for its location, and relationship with the highway network. Due to the age profile of residents, there are likely to be lower levels of vehicular trip generation (and car ownership), and higher than average use of buses and walking. The proximity of the shops at Eaton will enable many trips for everyday needs to be made on foot.
14. A cycle pedestrian crossing is planned as part of the Pedalway project on Bluebell Road close to the site, and the application proposes a financial contribution towards this crossing.
15. The proposed accesses and layout are acceptable, provided that raised tables are provided across the accesses to ensure pedestrian / cyclist priority, to be addressed through a S278 agreement. Conditions are also recommended with regard to provision of car club space, cycle parking, and details of refuse provision.

## **Environment Agency**

16. No comments received.

## **Housing Development Team**

17. Raised concerns in originally submitted proposals due to the visual divide between the affordable housing element and the remainder of the development. In addition the amount of car parking proposed for the affordable block was less than the main part of the development, and buggy charging facilities were also absent from the affordable housing. In addition some of the units did not meet minimum space standards to ensure they will be attractive to registered providers.
18. The revised proposals were considered to be an impressive response and have addressed previous concerns. Discussions with Norwich Housing Society are at an advanced stage and it is likely that they will be able to take ownership of the

affordable homes. All proposed units meet space standards and have adequate parking (75%). There is now no longer a significant divide between the affordable and other blocks, and visitors to the Yare Valley footpath no longer need to pass through the car park to the affordable block.

### **Norwich cycling Campaign**

19. No cycle parking is proposed within the development. Cyclists should have priority over vehicles entering the site through the vehicle accesses.

### **Cllr J Lubbock (Norwich City Council)**

20. Object to the proposals. Two additional access points would create highway safety risks. Using the existing access would create more opportunities to hide the development from Bluebell Road. The proposed density and scale at three stories is excessive, and does not respect the valley setting.
21. Retention of some the TPO trees which are proposed for removal would help to screen the development. A legal agreement needs to be in place to secure future provision, management and maintenance of related open space.

### **Cllr J Virgo (Norfolk County Council)**

22. Object to the proposals. The proposals contravene the planning aims for the site to minimise impact on the landscape and preserve the character of the area. The proposed density and scale of development would harm cross valley views and the character of the valley.

### **Norfolk county planning obligations**

23. The development will require 3 fire hydrants capable of delivering 20L of water per second.

### **Norfolk historic environment service**

24. Recommend that if planning permission is granted, conditions should be attached requiring a programme of archaeological work, in accordance with the NPPF.

### **Yare Valley Society**

25. Object to both the original and revised proposals. The application is not sensitively designed to minimise effects on important views across the valley from inside and outside the site. The viewpoints are blocked by terraced buildings and this does not allow views across the valley. It would not be difficult to arrange for such views through re-arranging or reducing buildings but this has been ignored. The two large accommodation blocks will dominate the landscape and impact negatively on the character of the area. The masterplan for the rest of site R42 also pays not regard to the need to minimise impact on the landscape, and does not complement the sites

role as a gateway to the city. The masterplan indicates development of the phase 2 areas of the site, resulting in the removal of substantial trees and hedges, contrary to Local Plan provisions.

26. The reference in the local plan to 120 units is intended to limit density to meet landscape conditions. The Masterplan ignores this and the applicants claim that their scheme can accommodate more disregards the constraint.
27. Bluebell Road has also become a much busier road, as a result of changes at the University and Hospital. The introduction of new accesses should therefore not be allowed and there is no reason why the existing access cannot serve the whole of the site. Additional accesses would harm safety for cyclists on Bluebell Road.
28. It is essential that a legal agreement is put in place to ensure that the future of the open space and the maintenance and improvement of the marsh and Yare Valley Walk is preserved in perpetuity.

#### **Natural areas officer**

29. Raised concerns in relation to the original proposals, around the absence of a clear footpath link from Bluebell Road to the Yare Valley footpath, as well as potential impacts of the development upon the valley.
30. The revised concerns were considered to be an improvement and address the earlier concerns, in particular around the provision of the proposed footpath through to the valley. In addition it was noted that the area of Fen and woodland at the western end of the Bartram Mowers ownership forms a valuable wildlife habitat (County Wildlife Site) and disturbance of this area should be minimised both during and after development. The Yare Valley is a recognised foraging area for bats. As such lighting will need to be carefully designed to minimise impacts and the development should be designed to allow animals such as hedgehogs to move freely across the site. Bird and bat boxes should be provided in particular House Martin boxes would be especially appropriate.
31. The conclusions of the submitted protected species reports on bats and badgers are accepted and it was considered that the proposals would not result in any harm to protected species.

#### **Cringleford Parish Council**

32. Object to both the original and revised proposals. The site is close to an environmentally sensitive area and intrusion on the scale proposed could damage the area, especially from the downward flow of water during the construction phase.
33. The Cringleford Neighbourhood Plan has direct bearing on the proposals but has been ignored. Policy ENV5 requires that the Yare Valley will be protected from development because of its character and location. The location of the development on the west facing slope means that the development will be clearly visible from

roads, houses, and gardens from the opposite side of the valley. The Warehouse like design is out of keeping with their surroundings. The three storey buildings proposed for the site will intrude on the eastward views from rising ground in Cringleford, and also from the river and will overtop screening trees. The description is also misleading as the total of number of units does not include the assisted living component.

34. In addition since only part of the R42 site is covered by the application, there are worries about what will happen to the remainder of the site which could also be developed, further harming the valley. The revised proposals would not address these concerns and would be exacerbated by further developments proposed in the valley in connection with the UEA / Rugby Club.

### **Tree protection officer**

35. The tree survey is an accurate reflection of both the size, species and condition of trees on the site and it will provide the basis for the ongoing arboricultural input required for the application.
36. With regards the loss of trees making up T18 and T21, whilst these are semi-mature/early mature specimens forming a significant feature within the site, they are the remnant of a beech hedge that has been allowed to grow unmanaged for a number of years. Whilst a number of the trees could be maintained in a sustainable form, the majority of the trees have a poor growth habit and limited individual worth. Given this, if the site is to be developed as proposed I do not think it is unreasonable to remove these trees and replace them as part of the landscaping scheme with a number of suitably large replacement trees as indicated on the landscaping submission. An Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS) and tree protection plan should be required by condition.

## **Assessment of planning considerations**

### **Relevant development plan policies**

37. **Joint Core Strategy for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk adopted March 2011 amendments adopted Jan. 2014 (JCS)**
- JCS1 Addressing climate change and protecting environmental assets
  - JCS2 Promoting good design
  - JCS3 Energy and water
  - JCS4 Housing delivery
  - JCS5 The economy
  - JCS6 Access and transportation
  - JCS7 Supporting communities
  - JCS9 Strategy for growth in the Norwich policy area
  - JCS10 Locations for major new or expanded communities in the Norwich policy area

- JCS12 The remainder of the Norwich urban area including the fringe parishes

**38. Norwich Development Management Policies Local Plan adopted Dec. 2014 (DM Plan)**

- DM1 Achieving and delivering sustainable development
- DM2 Ensuring satisfactory living and working conditions
- DM3 Delivering high quality design
- DM4 Providing for renewable and low carbon energy
- DM5 Planning effectively for flood resilience
- DM6 Protecting and enhancing the natural environment
- DM7 Trees and development
- DM8 Planning effectively for open space and recreation
- DM9 Safeguarding Norwich's heritage
- DM11 Protecting against environmental hazards
- DM12 Ensuring well-planned housing development
- DM28 Encouraging sustainable travel
- DM30 Access and highway safety
- DM31 Car parking and servicing
- DM32 Encouraging car free and low car housing
- DM33 Planning obligations and development viability

**39. Norwich Site Allocations Plan and Site Specific Policies Local Plan adopted December 2014 (SA Plan)**

- Policy R42 is directly relevant to the site. The policy states that "the 5.5ha site is allocated for development of a housing scheme for the over 55s, which may include assisted living / and or extra care housing. Development will be designed to:
- Minimise impact on the landscape of the Yare Valley and important views;
- Improve the strategic Yare Valley green infrastructure corridor, providing 17.5 hectares of public open space on land adjoining the site (red dotted line). The public open space will provide improved pedestrian / cycle access to and within the Valley, including improvements to the Yare Valley Walk. A management plan will be produced for the open space by the developer. A legal agreement will cover arrangements for future management and maintenance, of the open space in perpetuity; protect and enhance environmental assets within and adjacent to the site, including retaining tree belts.
- In order to ensure that setting and character of the site are respected and to minimise impact on the landscape and important views, proposals will accord with an agreed masterplan produced by the developer and agreed by the Council, covering the development site and adjacent open space. The masterplan will identify the precise areas within which development will be located, maximum building heights, the number and type of dwellings and the layout of open space".

## **Other material considerations**

### **40. Relevant sections of the National Planning Policy Framework March 2012 (NPPF):**

- NPPF0 Achieving sustainable development
- NPPF4 Promoting sustainable transport
- NPPF6 Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes
- NPPF7 Requiring good design
- NPPF8 Promoting healthy communities
- NPPF10 Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
- NPPF11 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
- NPPF12 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

### **41. Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)**

- Affordable housing SPD

## **Case Assessment**

42. Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Relevant development plan policies are detailed above. Material considerations include policies in the National Planning Framework (NPPF), the Councils standing duties, other policy documents and guidance detailed above and any other matters referred to specifically in the assessment below. The following paragraphs provide an assessment of the main planning issues in this case against relevant policies and material considerations.

### **Main issue 1: Principle of development**

43. Key policies and NPPF paragraphs – DM12, SA policy R42, JCS policy 4, NPPF paragraphs 49 and 14.

44. The site has historically been considered as undeveloped land at the edge of the urban area, and its development has been resisted due to its location adjacent to the Yare Valley character area. However the site was proposed for housing development for over 55s, by the site owners as part of the adoption process for the councils Site Allocations and Site Specific Policies Plan document. The Planning Inspectors report following the Examination in Public of this document required that the site was allocated for development for over 55s.

45. The Inspector considered that the provision of housing for over 55s would help to meet local housing needs and development of the site would have the potential to deliver significant areas of publicly accessible open space within the Yare Valley as well as improved access to the Yare Valley Walk itself. The site was considered to be well located to serve the needs of over 55s as it is located in proximity to shops

and services within Eaton village centre and good public transport connections to the city centre.

46. As such site R42 with its associated policy to guide development were included within the adopted Site Allocations Plan and Site Specific Policies Local Plan document, adopted December 2014. As such the principle of development of the site for over 55s is accepted, subject to compliance with policy R42 and other relevant policies within the Development Management Policies Local Plan.
47. It is noted that the proposals are for only part of the site area included within policy R42. This is because the applicant is proposing a phased development of site R42 with the current proposals comprising the first phase. Development of the remainder of the site, including the areas of land containing the Bartram Mower building will take place at a later date as part of separate application for planning permission. A masterplan has been submitted (and as required by policy R42) to demonstrate how the current the proposals would relate to development of the remainder of the site allocation. The masterplan would also provide a starting point to inform the development of future planning applications for the remainder of the site allocation area. Issues with regard to provision, maintenance and management of open space, as required by policy R42 are addressed within main issue 4.
48. Types of housing proposed including affordable housing: The proposals include provision of 42 private 'retirement living' residential units. These units are a form of sheltered housing comprising individual housing units but with an element of support, such as a warden or scheme manager and access to communal facilities. They are for private sale on a leasehold basis. These units fall within use class C3 (residential) and generate a requirement through policy JCS4 for provision of affordable housing.
49. As such the proposals include provision of 20 social rented affordable housing units for over 55s within a separate block within the development. The proposed affordable units are likely to owned and managed by Norwich Housing Society, a Registered Social Landlord (RSL) which specialises in provision of affordable housing for over 55s. The amount of affordable housing proposed would represent a provision of 32% which would marginally below the 33% required by policy JCS4. However the amount of affordable housing floorspace is approximately 38% of total residential (C3) floorspace. The affordable block has been designed in consultation with the Norwich Housing Society and the Council's Housing Development Team to best meet the needs of the affordable housing provider. As such the proposals are considered to be broadly in accordance with policy JCS4.
51. The proposals also comprise 6083sqm of 'assisted living' or extra care housing, arranged in the form of 57 self-contained units. However these units will provide accommodation for residents with enhanced care needs. This will include 24hr staffing, on site catering 365 days per year, domestic assistance and access to personal care support. As such this element of the proposal is considered to fall

within use class C2 (residential institution). There is no requirement for affordable housing as part of this element of the proposals.

## **Main issue 2: Design and landscape**

52. Key policies and NPPF paragraphs – JCS2, DM3, DM6, DM8, DM12, NPPF paragraphs 9, 17, 56 and 60-66.
53. The site is in a particularly sensitive location adjacent to the Yare Valley Character Area. It has an open undeveloped character which forms a buffer between the urban area to the east of Bluebell Road and the open spaces of the Yare Valley to the south west. As such policies DM3, DM6, DM12 and R42, require that proposals respond this context and its topography, and minimise impacts on the Yare Valley and surrounding area.
54. The design proposals for both the application site and the accompanying masterplan for the whole of the site allocation area have been informed by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA), which considers the site in its wider context, its topography and key views both through the site and into it from the wider area. The LVIA shows that due to sloping levels across the site development closest to Bluebell Road will be more prominent in a range of views. As such development in this location should not be greater than 2 stories in height. The south west areas of the site are lower lying and would be less prominent in views from the east and west. As such development up to 3 stories in height in these locations would not be unduly prominent.
55. The proposed development been designed with regard to these parameters. The retirement living block is arranged in a U form with a 2 storey section closest to Bluebell Road, although still set back some distance behind the boundary hedge which includes new planting. The 3 storey elements of the retirement living block and the assisted living block are located in the lower areas of the site further from Bluebell Road. Car parking between these blocks is proposed to be accommodated within an avenue dominated by large Beech trees within the centre of this space. Replacement Beech trees are proposed in this space in place of the existing line Beech trees as they will have greater capacity to grow into larger and more attractive features, than the current cramped trees. The affordable housing block is proposed close the south eastern boundary of the site, and accessed from the main new vehicle access, and is modest in scale. The proposed building have been designed in a clean and simple contemporary manner but with some traditional references such as pitched roofs and a palette of locally referenced materials, such as red and buff brick, slate and timber boarding, which are proposed consistently across the site, including the affordable block.
56. The proposals have also been revised, to integrate the affordable block more closely with the rest of the development, to widen the proposed views across the site towards the Yare Valley, and provide clear, legible pedestrian links down to the river valley. The scale of the assisted living block adjacent to the pedestrian link through



to the valley has been reduced in scale by a storey, to widen views of the valley. The Masterplan demonstrates how the remainder of the site allocation can be developed, as well as the relationship between the proposals and the surrounding open space. The masterplan includes height parameters for new development in different areas of the site which follow the principles set by the current application.

57. Following a review of the submitted elevations, views and CGI images the proposed layout and scale are considered to relate well with the landscape context of the site and would not be unduly prominent in views from within Bluebell Road or the Yare Valley itself. The proposed architectural approach is also supported as it provides a good balance between the clean contemporary approach which is normally sought in new developments as well as being suited to proposed occupiers.
58. It is accepted that the massing of the proposals is significant with development grouped within 3 large footprint buildings. However this is essential for the McCarthy Stone format of provision to ensure that services and support can be provided easily to residents. The overall horizontal mass of the blocks is broken up through use of contrasting materials and glazed elements. The scale of the blocks at three stories at its highest point has been located in the areas of the site which are best suited accommodated this scale without undue landscape impacts. Some tree planting is also proposed along the south western boundary of the site, adjacent to the assisted living block which will further reduce its prominence within the landscape.
59. As a result of the above design features the proposals are considered to accord with the principles of policy DM6, DM12 and R42 and minimise the impacts on the Yare Valley and surrounding area.
60. Density: Concerns are noted with regard to the density of the development with 57 residential units and a substantial block of assisted living accommodation being close to the figure of 120 units noted in the site allocation text, whilst only occupying half the site.
61. However it should be noted that this figure is intended for housing land supply purposes, and an assessment of the appropriate density of the site should be designed, rather than by density figures alone. The submitted LVIA demonstrates that the proposals can be accommodated in the landscape without undue harm. In addition it is noted that by its nature over 55s accommodation is likely to be high density in character, as unit sizes are small, and need to be arranged within large buildings so that communal facilities and support can be easily provided. As such the density of the development on its own is considered acceptable. It is noted that the masterplan envisages a lower density of development on the second phase of the site, where a different format of over 55s accommodation could be provided.

### **Main issue 3: Transport**

62. Key policies and NPPF paragraphs – JCS6, DM28, DM30, DM31, NPPF paragraphs 17 and 39.

63. Access arrangements to the site were considered by the Planning Inspectorate during the allocation of the site for over 55s housing as well as part of this application. Provision of this type of housing is not considered to result in undue impacts upon the surrounding highway network, in particular as the nature of the proposed housing will be less likely to generate vehicle movements during the am / pm peaks as conventional housing. The sites proximity to public transport routes into the city and Eaton centre will also assist in reducing car based travel.
64. During the Examination in Public process in relation to the adoption of the site allocations document the inspector did consider that the formation of an additional access would be likely to be acceptable, to ensure access arrangements to the new development were sufficiently flexible. The original proposals included two additional vehicle accesses and the potential for these to disrupt the Bluebell Road footway / cycleway were noted during the consultation process. The revised proposals address this concern through provision of only one new vehicular access to access both the affordable and retirement / assisted living blocks. Access down the cycleway / footway adjacent to the affordable block will be restricted to emergency vehicles only, and details of the design of this entrance to ensure this is the case will be secured by condition. The removal of this second access will improve conditions for cyclists on Bluebell Road as well as better integrating the affordable and market housing blocks within the development. Details of the accesses are also required by condition to ensure that cycle / pedestrian priority across Bluebell Road can be maintained through use of measures such as raised tables.
65. It is also proposed that the development makes a financial contribution of £25,000 towards the provision of a new cycle pedestrian crossing on Bluebell Road adjacent to the site. This will benefit occupiers of the development in being better able to access bus stops on Newmarket Road, as well as cyclists who need to cross to join cycle routes on Newmarket and Unthank Road.
66. The proposed car parking provision is considered to be appropriate to meet the needs of the development, given McCarthy Stone's previous experience of car ownership at their developments. In addition car parking numbers have also been revised to the meet the needs of the affordable block. As such it is considered that the proposed car parking provision would accord with policy requirements.
67. In addition cycle parking for staff and visitors can be accommodated internally within the development, within the buggy charging area. A small number of visitor spaces servicing the affordable block are also required and details of these will be secured through appropriate conditions.

#### **Main issue 4: Open space / biodiversity**

68. Key policies and NPPF paragraphs – JCS1, DM6, NPPF paragraph 118.

69. Submitted habitat surveys demonstrate that the site is used for foraging by Bats and Badgers, although development will not harm these protected species unduly subject to appropriate landscaping measures within the new development. The conclusions of these reports are accepted by the Councils natural areas officer. The landscaping of the site retains a relatively open character with boundary treatments which will allow species such as hedgehogs to forage easily across the site. New landscaping and tree planting is also proposed which will help support biodiversity across the site as part of the wider Yare Valley. A condition is proposed requiring provision of bird and bat boxes which will assist further in this regard.
70. The site was also allocated on the basis that it would deliver / safeguard significant new amounts of open space and improved access to the Yare Valley. The proposals include two new legible and attractive routes down to the river valley from Bluebell Road. The masterplan shows how this will link into the wider network of open space within the Yare Valley. The proposals comprise a phased approach to securing of open space. The current proposals will include the provision of Strawberry Fields to the north as permanently publicly accessible, managed open space. To be secured as part of a S106 legal agreement, including provisions for management through an appropriate management company, which is the responsibility of Bartram Mowers and McCarthy Stone.
71. The areas of land to the south west of the development will continue as is currently the case, with public access permitted but not formalised. Future applications for the development of the remainder of the site allocation will deliver this area of land as permanently accessible managed open space at a later date. This phasing is necessary to ensure that an undue management burden is not placed on only part of the site allocation area. The submitted management plan shows that landscape management will take place in a naturalistic manner, which will not alter its character, but will be sufficient to ensure public safety. There are no plans to interfere with or increase access to the existing County Wildlife Site which is closer to the Yare River.
72. Landscape proposals as part of this current application also include the installation of boardwalk along the river walk to improve access in places which can become boggy. As such these measures are considered to meet the requirements of the policy R42 in terms of improving access to the Yare Valley and improving the Yare Walk itself.

### Compliance with other relevant development plan policies

73. A number of development plan policies include key targets for matters such as parking provision and energy efficiency. The table below indicates the outcome of the officer assessment in relation to these matters.

Requirement	Relevant policy	Compliance
Refuse Storage/servicing	DM31	Yes. Sufficient space is provided within buildings for storage of waste and recycling. Access is achievable for waste collection vehicles.
Energy efficiency	JCS 1 & 3 DM3	Yes subject to condition. The proposed buildings are designed with high levels of airtightness, insulation and energy efficient appliances and fittings. In addition photovoltaic panels are proposed on south facing roofslopes which will provide a sufficient proportion of on-site energy demand from renewable sources, to accord with JCS policies.
Water efficiency	JCS 1 & 3	Yes subject to condition.
Sustainable urban drainage	DM3/5	Yes subject to condition. A drainage strategy has been submitted which proposes collection of surface water from the development within a swale / drainage basin, within the open space to the south west. This would represent a sustainable form of drainage which would reduce pressure of sewage systems. Full details are required by condition.

### Other matters

74. The following matters have been assessed and considered satisfactory and in accordance with relevant development plan policies, subject to appropriate conditions and mitigation:

75. Tree implications: The removal of Beech trees within the centre of the development is accepted given their cramped conditions and subject to replacement with suitably large specimens. Impacts on trees elsewhere in the site is also considered acceptable subject to submission of an Arboricultural Method Statement and tree protection measures.

76. Amenity for existing and proposed occupiers: The proposed development would provide a good standard of amenity for future occupiers, in terms of space standards, outlook and daylight, which is similar in format to other McCarthy Stone developments. Concerns with regard to isolation of residents within rooms are noted. However the development is well served by lifts to allow residents to access ground floor facilities and within the assisted living block, 24 hour care and support is available.
77. The proposed buildings are also sited some distance from neighbouring properties on either side of Bluebell road and as such will not result in any undue loss of outlook, daylight or sunlight to these properties.

### **Equalities and diversity issues**

78. There are no significant equality or diversity issues.

### **S106 Obligations**

79. The legal agreement will also secure provision of affordable housing, financial contribution towards a crossing point on Bluebell Road, and commitments towards provision and management of open space.

### **Local finance considerations**

80. Under Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 the council is required when determining planning applications to have regard to any local finance considerations, so far as material to the application. Local finance considerations are defined as a government grant or the Community Infrastructure Levy.
81. Whether or not a local finance consideration is material to a particular decision will depend on whether it could help to make the development acceptable in planning terms. It would not be appropriate to make a decision on the potential for the development to raise money for a local authority.
82. In this case local finance considerations are not considered to be material to the case.

### **Conclusion**

83. The principle of development of this site is accepted following the adoption of policy R42 of the Councils Site Allocations and Policies Local Plan. The proposals would contribute towards meeting housing supply for over 55s in the city, as well provision of affordable housing. The development has been designed in a manner which takes account of its sensitive landscape setting, adjacent to Yare Valley, alongside the operational requirements of the development. The proposals would also provide new open space and improved public access to the Yare Valley. In addition impacts upon the surrounding highway network would be acceptable.

84. As such the proposals are in accordance with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework and the Development Plan, and it has been concluded that there are no material considerations that indicate it should be determined otherwise.

## **Recommendation**

To approve application no. 15/01646/F - Bartram Mowers Ltd Bluebell Road Norwich NR4 7LG and grant planning permission subject to the completion of a satisfactory legal agreement with the following heads of terms:

1. Affordable housing;
2. Provision and maintenance of open space in perpetuity
3. Financial contribution of £25,000 towards pedestrian / cycle crossing on Bluebell Road.

And subject to the following conditions:

1. Standard time limit;
2. In accordance with plans;
3. Details of materials
4. S278 agreement in relation to design of accesses, details to be agreed
5. Landscaping, including replacement tree planting, boundary treatments
6. Details of SUDS
7. Details of lighting
8. Details of visitor cycle parking
9. Car / cycle parking to be provided prior to commencement of the development, including one car club space
10. AMS / TPP.
11. Details of enhancements to Yare Valley footpath.
12. Details of biodiversity enhancements, including bird / bat boxes on buildings.
13. Water efficiency.
14. Details of fire hydrants
15. Development not to be occupied by residents under 55 years of age.

### **Article 35(2) 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 officer report.







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**LEGEND**

- Cedec gravel path
- Existing tree
- Proposed tree
- Proposed new tree planting to reinforce existing hedge
- Proposed vehicular macadam
- Proposed block paving
- Proposed buff paving slabs
- Proposed tegula paving
- Proposed retaining wall
- Proposed hedge
- Proposed native planting mix
- Wildflower meadow WFT landscape (wildflower turf te: 01256 771222)
- Mown lawn
- Proposed resin bound gravel
- Proposed bench
- Proposed water feature
- Proposed planting
- Proposed estate fence and gate
- Table and chairs

**ubudesign**

**PROJECT:** BLUEBELL ROAD, NORWICH  
**TITLE:** GENERAL ARRANGEMENT PLAN  
**CLIENT:** THE PLANNING BUREAU  
**SCALE:** 1:500@A1  
**DATE:** 28/08/2015  
**JOB NO:** 1211  
**DWG NO:** 1211\_GA\_100  
**STATUS:** PLANNING  
**REV:** A

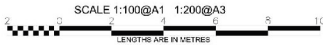
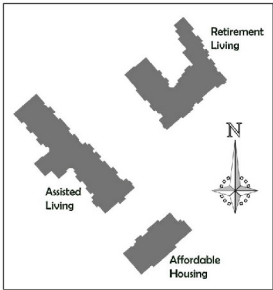




Side (North East) Elevation



Rear (South East) Elevation





South West Elevation



South East Elevation

SCALE 1:100 @ A0  
1"=10'-0"



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Region: MI - 1891  
Project No: 03 - AC - 010 - A  
Design No: 152411  
Revision: Sept15  
Scale: 1:100 @ A0  
NTS @ A3



