

Planning Applications Committee

8 January, 2009

Section C

<b>Agenda Number:</b>	<b>C</b>
<b>Section/Area:</b>	INNER
<b>Ward:</b>	MANCROFT
<b>Officer:</b>	Mark Brown
<b>Valid Date:</b>	5 December 2008
<b>Application Number:</b>	08/01216/U
<b>Site Address:</b>	The Sunlight Service Group Ltd Oak Street Norwich NR3 3BJ
<b>Proposal:</b>	Retrospective application for temporary use of site as a public car park for 24 months.
<b>Applicant:</b>	<b>Mr Frederick Nkrumah</b>
<b>Agent:</b>	<b>Mr Frederick Nkrumah</b>

**THE SITE**

The application site is located to the west of Oak Street between New Mills Yard, which runs to the north of the site, and Unicorn Yard, which runs to the South. The site was previously occupied by light industrial buildings used for laundry services. These buildings have since been demolished under a conservation area consent (application no. 07/00523/C) permitted in September 2007.

**PLANNING HISTORY**

The site has consent for redevelopment for 13 townhouses and 8 flats with associated parking this was granted in October 2007 under application no. 07/00525/F.

## **THE PROPOSAL**

The proposal is for retrospective permission for use of the site as a public car park on a temporary basis for 24 months. The site would provide a maximum of 130 spaces. The proposal details opening hours of 0500 to 2000 seven days per week.

## **CONSULTATIONS**

**Neighbours:** Advertised on site, in the press and adjacent neighbours notified.

No Response

## **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

### **Relevant National Planning Policy**

PPS1 – Delivering Sustainable Development

Supplement to PPS1 – Planning and Climate Change

PPG13 – Transport

PPG15 – Planning and the Historic Environment

### **Relevant East of England Plan Policies:**

ENV7 – Quality in the built environment

### **Relevant Local Plan Policies:**

Adopted City of Norwich Replacement Local Plan Saved Policies:

HBE8 – Development within conservation areas

TRA3 – Model shift measures in support of the Norwich Area Transportation Strategy (NATS)

TRA21 – Tariffs on car parks in City centre

TRA22 – Information for drivers on car parking

TRA24 – City centre strategy

### **Supplementary Planning Documents and Guidance (SPD and SPG):**

City Centre Conservation Area Appraisal – September 2007

The Norwich Area Transport Strategy (October, 2004)

## **Principle**

The Norwich Area Transportation Strategy (NATS) was reviewed in 2004 and is a joint strategy between Norwich City Council, Norfolk County Council, Broadland and South Norfolk District Councils. The strategy provides the detailed policy background to transport within the Norwich area. The strategy seeks to cater for growth in travel demand, whilst maintaining or improving the quality of the built environment and supporting the economic growth of the area by accommodating the growth in demand for trips by means other than the private car.

NATS gives considerable emphasis to measures to promote a shift of modal choice from the car to walking, cycling and public transport. NATS policies 8 and 32 are critical to the assessment of this application. These seek to improve accessibility by accommodating growth by means other than the car and state that parking provision in the City Centre will be limited to the replacement of existing provision.

This is consistent with saved policies TRA3, TRA21 and TRA24 of the Local Plan which seek a modal shift away from the car and seek reduced intrusion of the car into the City Centre and the objectives of PPG13. Furthermore policy TRA21 of the Local Plan puts a cap on City Centre public parking levels of 10,002 spaces a figure which is already exceeded.

City Centre parking should support its retail and leisure functions. Commuting causes peak hour traffic congestion, and should be accommodated within the urban area by public transport, walking and cycling, and outside the urban area through the provision of long-stay parking at 'Park and Ride' sites. The policies have been successful and have actually resulted in a small reduction in traffic entering the City Centre, despite the huge amounts of development that have taken place

Furthermore, the strategy is underpinned by review of City Centre car parking, which concludes that currently there is an oversupply of parking in the City Centre (even taking account of the cap in Policy TRA21). This is demonstrated by the current competition between car park operators that is providing City Centre parking at levels substantially below 'breakeven' taking into account the cost of the land, construction and operation.

Vacant site car parks such as this will only worsen the situation. The tariff regimes which offer low cost all day parking are clearly aimed at commuters, and this undermines not only the overall transport strategy, and increases traffic levels causing even more congestion in peak periods, but it also undermines the operation of the 'Park and Ride' service.

Even if the car park were operated on a short-stay tariff it would add to the supply of parking in the City Centre, forcing further competition, and undermining the operation of legitimate, and properly managed and secure provision, whilst also encouraging a generally more car-dependant culture. This will have a knock on effect of reducing reliability of public transport and make cycling and walking less pleasant alternatives, whilst adding to calls for ever increasing vehicular capacity on the road network.

### **Impact on the Surrounding Conservation Area**

The site is located within the northern riverside character area of the City Centre Conservation Area. It is considered that the surface car park on this site has a significant negative impact on the surrounding Conservation Area. The boundary

treatment of Heras fencing is also inappropriate, giving a temporary and unattractive appearance and also allowing views through the site. No measures for temporary screening or landscaping have been proposed to attempt to mitigate the negative impact of the car park.

## **Conclusion**

Parking Policy is a critical part of the overall transport strategy for the City. Whilst in the run-up to Christmas, it may seem that parking in the City Centre is in short supply, in reality, there are very few days in the year when there is not an oversupply. Additional temporary car parking will not only undermine the operation of legitimate, and properly run and maintained facilities (including 'Park and Ride'), but also increase congestion in a City where the opportunity to facilitate increased car use is not only undesirable, but severely restrained. The proposals are therefore contrary to saved policies TRA3, TRA21, TRA22 and TRA24 of the City of Norwich Replacement Local Plan and the objectives of PPS1, PPG13 and the NATS to promote a shift of modal choice from the car to walking, cycling and public transport.

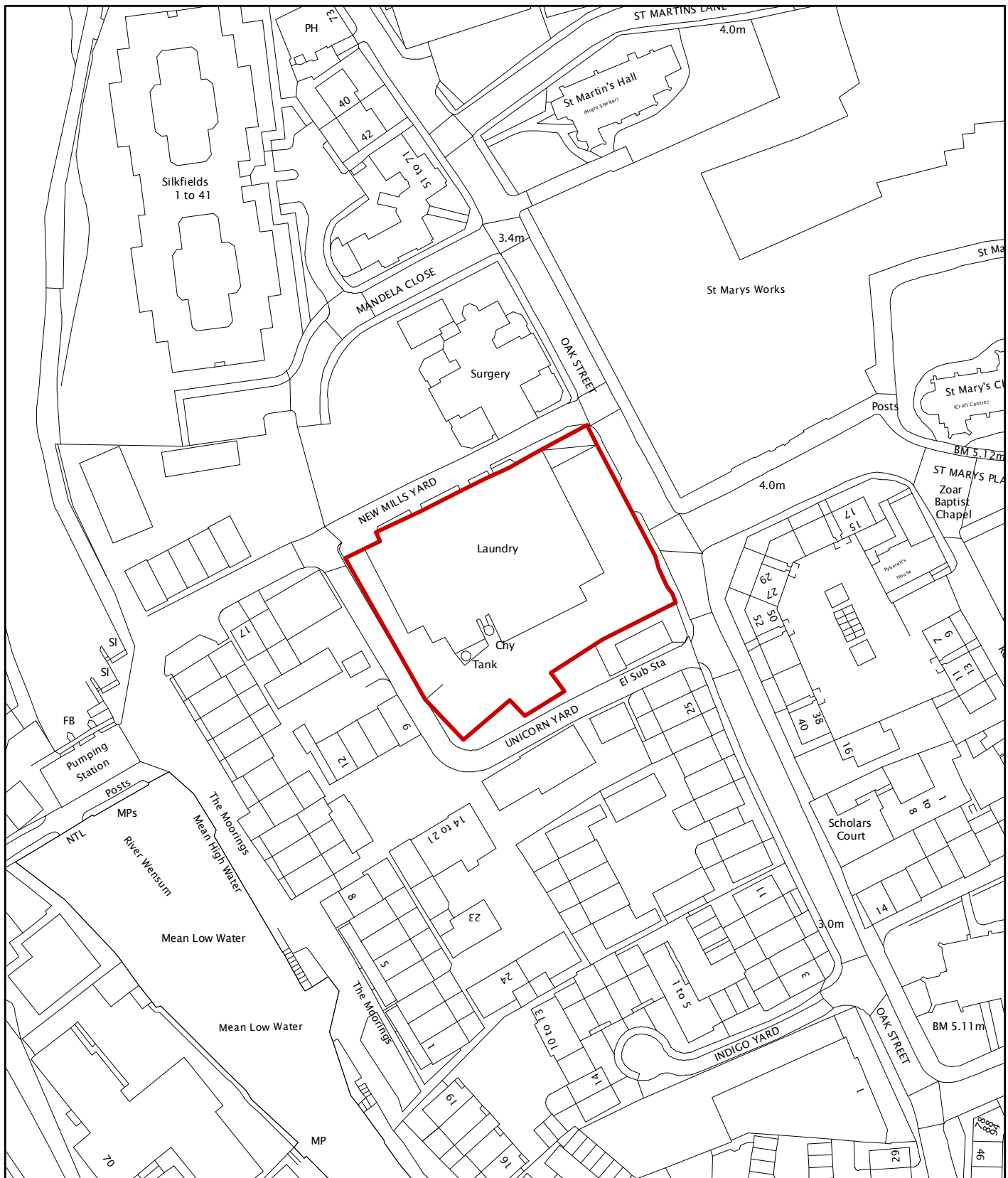
The proposals are also considered to have a negative impact on the character of the surrounding City Centre Conservation Area contrary to saved policy HBE8 of the adopted City of Norwich Replacement Local Plan, policy ENV7 of the adopted East of England Plan and the objectives of PPG15.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

(1) REFUSE PLANNING PERMISSION for the following reasons:

1. The proposed temporary car park would undermine the transportation strategy for Norwich to promote a shift of modal choice from the car to walking, cycling and public transport and as such would be contrary to saved policies TRA3, TRA21, TRA22 and TRA24 of the City of Norwich Replacement Local Plan and the objectives of PPS1, PPG13 and the Norwich Area Transport Strategy.
2. The proposed temporary car park would have a negative impact on the character of the surrounding City Centre Conservation Area contrary to saved policy HBE8 of the adopted City of Norwich Replacement Local Plan, policy ENV7 of the adopted East of England Plan and the objectives of PPG15.

(2) AUTHORISE enforcement action under s.172 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) to secure the cessation of the unauthorised use.



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Site Address - The Sunlight Service Group Ltd, Oak Street

Scale - 1:1250



**NORWICH**  
City Council

DIRECTORATE OF REGENERATION  
AND DEVELOPMENT

