

## Report for Resolution

**Report to** Planning Applications Committee  
**Date** 10 June 2010  
**Report of** Head of Planning Services  
**Subject** 10/00464/F 1 St Johns Close Norwich NR1 2AD

**Item**  
**6(3)**

### SUMMARY

<b>Description:</b>	Single storey rear extension to shop.
<b>Reason for consideration at Committee:</b>	Objection
<b>Recommendation:</b>	Approve
<b>Ward:</b>	Town Close
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Mr Jonathan Bunting Planner, Development Management 01603 212506
<b>Valid date:</b>	10th April 2010
<b>Applicant:</b>	Mrs Deidre Whyatt
<b>Agent:</b>	Ms Gabi Feingold-West, Terra Firma Limited

### INTRODUCTION

#### The Site

##### Location and Context

1. The premises the subject of this application (known as Eaton Pharmacy) is a two storey retail chemist's shop, dating from the 1930s. It has been in use as a local chemist for very many years. The shop is situated at the southern end of the long-established St Johns Close local shopping centre on the western side of Hall Road between its junction with Cecil Road and the road bridge over the former railway cutting now accommodating the Lakenham Way footpath/cycleway. Lakenham Way offers a convenient and direct car-free route from the south of Norwich into the city centre some 2km to the north, and can be reached via a footpath/cycle link leading from the north end of St Johns Close.
2. The traditional suburban shopping parade fronts a cul-de sac with access from Hall Road at its southern end, the shops being set back from the main road and screened from it by mature trees, bollards and railings. Servicing is taken from the cul-de-sac in front of the shops and there is also a dedicated customer parking bay providing around twelve spaces and additional short-term parking and loading on-street in front of the shops. The parade comprises nine shop units in total (two of which are currently vacant). The shops are housed in pre-war semi-detached and detached purpose-built premises, all of which originally had living accommodation over the shop but some now have the upper floor space converted for ancillary offices and storage. There are numerous later extensions and additions to the rear of the parade.

3. As well as Eaton Pharmacy the parade offers a range of local shops and services to the immediate surrounding residential area. At the far north end of St Johns Close and separate from the parade is a large, comparatively modern industrial building (Seckers Engineering) within an attached service yard accessed off the end of St John's Close, with additional ancillary buildings to the rear of the shop unit at number 7. A pair of comparatively modern detached houses adjoins immediately to the south.
4. 1 St Johns Close is the left hand shop unit in a pair. The building is constructed in brick with rendered, white-painted elevations, a hipped pantile roof and modern painted timber shop front. The shop occupies a plot approximately 10m wide by 31m deep. There is a 1970s-built single storey addition to the left hand side with a separate entrance (previously let as a separate small shop unit, number 1A, but currently accommodating an additional staff and office area for the pharmacy). A single storey rear extension (measuring approximately 7m x 7.4m) was constructed in 2006 to extend the dispensary at the rear and create additional storage space for the pharmacy, also acting as a central distribution warehouse for three other satellite pharmacies in the area run by the Natural Health chain. The remainder of the curtilage – the former rear garden – is undeveloped and largely neglected with scrub, undergrowth and some dead and aging fruit trees along the rear boundary fence separating the site from the adjoining rear gardens of houses in Brian Avenue.

### **Constraints**

5. The premises are located within the St. Johns Close local shopping parade which is a defined local shopping centre in the City of Norwich Replacement Local Plan. The premises occupy a former garden curtilage backing onto domestic gardens in Brian Avenue and the proximity of these houses is considered to impose some limitations on the scale of development which can reasonably be accommodated within the site.

### **Topography**

6. The site is level with no noted physical constraints on development. The houses adjoining to the rear in Brian Avenue are, however, set at a slightly higher level, and this will have implications for effective screening and visibility.

### **Planning History**

**4780660/F** – Erection of extension to form shop and use of first floor as associated storeroom and office. Approved 20th July 1978.

**05/01143/F** - Single storey extension at rear to accommodate dispensary and storage. Approved 1st February 2006. This scheme was originally proposed to include demolition of the side extension and provision of a hard-surfaced car parking and servicing area at the rear. Amendments were negotiated to delete the car parking and reduce the depth of the extension to the size as eventually built.

### **The Proposal**

7. It is proposed to construct a further single storey extension onto the back of the existing single-storey warehouse and dispensary to roughly double its total floor area and increase the available storage space in the warehouse area from around 45 to 111 square metres. The proposed extension would measure 10m by 7.4m and mirror the design of the existing 2006 extension, being built in brick with a flat roof with low parapet walls around the perimeter. The rear wing as enlarged would extend some 21m back from the original shop and would occupy much of the remaining area of the former garden curtilage, coming

within 2.2m of the rear boundary with 5 Brian Avenue. The existing scrub vegetation and small fruit trees on the site would be cleared, the boundary fence would be renewed and new screen planting provided along the reinstated rear boundary.

8. The applicant has provided justification for the application on the basis that the pharmacy chain has been expanding rapidly over the past few years and the storage facility constructed in 2006 is already inadequate to serve its current storage and distribution needs. An internal site inspection has confirmed that the storage warehouse is very intensively used and evidently over its operational capacity.

## Representations Received

9. Adjacent and neighbouring occupiers were notified in writing on 20th April 2010. Two letters of representation have been received citing the issues as summarised in the table below.

Issues Raised	Response
Concern that the boundary fence and planting should provide adequate security and be high enough to screen the extension from view from the adjoining higher level houses/ gardens along Brian Avenue: suggested that fence could be increased in height to 8ft (2.4m). More detail requested on form of planting proposed.	These details can be agreed by condition: see paras 16, 21.
No objection in principle but concern that proposal should not set precedent for any future rear servicing or vehicular access road along the rear of the St. Johns Close shops, resulting in loss of privacy/security for residents and businesses. Recent problems of drug misuse in area cited.	The proposal does not involve any new access to the rear and the extension if approved would preclude the option of providing a rear service road in future. See para. 19

## Consultation Responses

10. The Transportation Planner was consulted on 16th April and has indicated verbally that in his opinion there would be no significant problems of servicing or traffic generation arising from the proposal.

# ASSESSMENT OF PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

## Relevant Planning Policies

### National Planning Policies

Planning Policy Statement 1 (PPS1) – Delivering Sustainable Development

Planning Policy Statement 1 supplement – Planning & Climate Change

Planning Policy Statement 4 (PPS4) – Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth

### Relevant Policies of the East of England Plan (2008)

SS6 – City and Town Centres

ENV7 – Quality in the Built Environment

### **Relevant Local Plan Policies**

#### **City of Norwich Replacement Local Plan 2004**

EMP2 – Expansion of Existing Businesses

SHO3 – Retail Development: location and sequential test

SHO12 – Retail development within District and Local Centres

HBE12 – Design

HBE19 – Design for safety and security

EP22 - Residential Amenity

TRA6 - Parking

TRA8 – Servicing provision

### **Supplementary Planning Documents and Guidance**

Not applicable.

### **Principle of Development**

#### **Policy Considerations**

11. National policy in PPS1 seeks to ensure that development is located appropriately and accessibly in accordance with sustainable principles. PPS4 encourages appropriate business development to support economic growth, also seeking (inter alia) to safeguard retail vitality by focusing accessibly located shopping development and other supporting services and facilities within defined centres.
12. East of England Plan policy SS6 sets out a preferred hierarchy of retail centres, seeking to focus new development and retail and service uses predominantly in defined centres. Policy ENV7 requires a high quality of design in all new development.
13. City of Norwich Replacement Local Plan policy EMP2 supports the expansion of existing businesses where this can be achieved without adverse environmental and visual impact and where proposals achieve satisfactory access, parking, safety and security. Policy SHO3 seeks to ensure that retail development is focused on existing centres and is located sustainably and accessibly, whilst Policy SHO12 supports development of an appropriate scale in district and local centres. Policy HBE12 seeks a high standard of design in all new development and policy HBE19 provides specifically for design to promote safety and security and to minimise crime. Policy EP22 requires that development should not harm the amenity of residents through noise, odour, light pollution or loss of outlook and daylighting. Policies TRA6 and TRA8 require adequate provision for parking and servicing,

### **Retail and Economic Implications**

14. Insofar as this is development for ancillary storage which supports an existing local retail business it is appropriate to consider the proposal in the context of national and local shopping policies. The provision of additional storage capacity in this highly accessible location would provide for the expansion of this long-established local pharmacy in situ and support and safeguard its long-term future as a valued community facility, thereby sustaining the vitality and continued viability of the local centre. It is considered that the proposal can be supported in principle as appropriate development within the local shopping centre.

15. It is acknowledged that the storage facility would be serving other businesses in the Natural Health pharmacy chain as well as Eaton Pharmacy itself, and the alternative to expanding the warehouse capacity on site would be to relocate the storage to a separate warehouse building on an industrial estate or business park. This would almost certainly be less accessible overall than the present premises, would increase the need to travel and would sever the retail and distribution arms of the business to the detriment of its overall efficiency and standards of service to the community. The proposal would create two new full-time and seven new part time jobs. On balance it is considered that expanding the warehouse on the present site at 1 St. Johns Close would further the aims of local employment policy in providing for accessible local employment and promoting and sustaining a successful local business. The proposal can therefore be supported in economic development terms.

## **Impact on Living Conditions**

### **Overlooking and Loss of Privacy**

16. The proposed development is substantial in relation to the original shop and would cover the majority of the remaining rear curtilage but would be no higher than the existing single storey wing it would be extending. It is considered that with adequate screening and planting to the rear boundary, the extension would not be unduly prominent from the nearest neighbouring residential gardens. It would not be readily visible from the front of the St Johns Close shopping parade nor from the houses in Cecil Road from where it would be screened by intervening trees.

### **Form and Scale**

17. The development would result in an extension of the same width, but roughly double the depth and floorspace of the existing dispensary and store. Although on plan this is a very substantial addition to the 1930s shop which (in common with its neighbours) has a typical suburban character and domestic scale, its height would be limited to a single storey so as not to appear overbearing in relation to the older part of the building. There are a number of precedents for rear extensions in this shopping parade: the applicant cites the example of Seckers ancillary industrial/storage buildings located at the rear of and alongside 6 and 7 St John's Close as being of very similar scale and massing to the building now proposed. It would therefore be difficult to argue on this basis that the building is inappropriate in form and scale to the existing shopping parade or (if effectively screened) would detrimentally affect the character and amenity of the area.

## **Transport and Access**

### **Vehicular Access and Servicing**

18. The submitted Design and Access Statement indicates there would be an increase in the volume of goods delivered to the site but no actual increase in the number of deliveries. It is considered that since deliveries routinely occur in the early morning outside the busiest trading hours for shops in the parade, the development would be unlikely to give rise to problems of traffic congestion or result in additional noise or disturbance for neighbours. Although there is sometimes sporadic vehicle parking in St. Johns Close outside the designated parking areas it is considered that there is adequate parking and manoeuvring space on street for delivery vehicles and unauthorised parking can (as now) be dealt with under available traffic enforcement powers..

### **Car Parking**

19. As was the case with the previous scheme submitted in 2006, there will be no rear service

area or rear car park involved, deliveries being taken through the shop from the front via a level access. There would therefore be no additional vehicle manoeuvring within the rear curtilage, no additional traffic noise or fumes in this area causing loss of amenity for neighbours and no potential for providing any new or extended rear service road to the parade.

### **Cycle Routes and Pedestrian Links**

20. The site is exceptionally well served by both cycle routes and public transport, being readily accessible from the Lakenham Way cycle route linking directly with the city centre and within two minutes walk from the nearest bus stops in Hall Road and Cecil Road. The St Johns Close local shopping parade is centrally and accessibly located to serve the local walk-in population in Lakenham and the Trafford Road area.

### **Trees and Landscaping**

#### **Planting and Screening to Rear**

21. The existing fruit trees in the rear curtilage and along the boundary are in poor condition (one is dead) and although when in leaf they provide fairly effective screening for the present extension, are all at or nearing the end of their lives. In response to concerns raised at pre-application stage, the Design and Access Statement makes reference to the intention to “reinstate a new boundary fence” and provide “tasteful low maintenance planting” to screen the new extension, but the applicant has provided no further details at the time of writing. It is considered therefore that these matters should be the subject of a pre-commencement condition to ensure that screening, planting and boundary treatment are visually appropriate and will provide both effective screening from neighbouring gardens and proper site security.

### **Conclusions**

22. Subject to conditions requiring further details of landscaping, planting and boundary treatment, maintenance for the landscaping, matching roofing and facing materials and development in accordance with the submitted plans, the proposed single-storey rear extension is acceptable and accords with the provisions of the adopted development plan. Although representing a fairly substantial addition in comparison with the existing shop as extended, it is considered that the proposal will not have an overbearing effect on the appearance of the shop premises and the local parade as a whole, or a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the wider area. Effective planting and screening should ensure that there is no detrimental impact on the amenity or outlook of adjoining residents. There is unlikely to be any significant impact on the area from increased servicing or delivery traffic .

23. The proposal will, in addition, support and enhance the vitality, viability and retail function of this established local shopping centre whilst providing for the expansion of a locally based business in a sustainable and accessible location.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

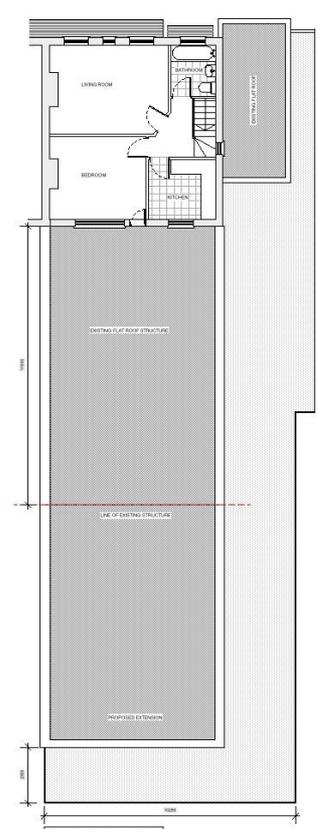
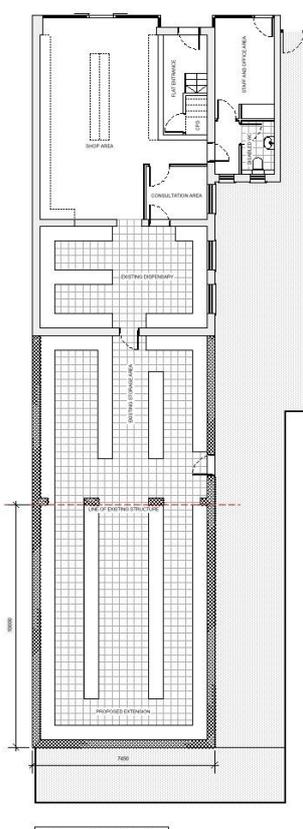
To approve application 10/00464/F and GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION subject to the following conditions:

1. Standard time limit
2. Roofing and facing materials to match existing extension;
3. Details of landscaping and boundary walls and fences to be agreed;

4. Maintenance of landscaping to be agreed;
5. Development in accordance with submitted plans.

#### Reason for Recommendation

The decision to approve this application and grant planning permission has been taken having regard to Planning Policy Statement 1 (PPS1) and its Climate Change Supplement, Planning Policy Statement 4 (PPS4), policies SS6 and ENV7 of the East of England Plan (adopted May 2008) and the following saved policies of the City of Norwich Replacement Local Plan (adopted November 2004): EMP2, SHO3, SHO12, HBE12, HBE19, EP22, TRA6 and TRA8. Subject to the conditions listed, the proposed rear extension is considered to be acceptable. Although representing a substantial addition to the existing retail shop, the extension would be appropriately designed in the context of the shopping parade, and (as conditioned) would not have a significant effect on the character and appearance of the area nor detrimentally affect the amenity or outlook of adjoining occupiers by reason of noise, visual intrusion or traffic generation. The extension would, in addition, provide appropriately for the expansion of a long-established local business which also serves a small number of other pharmacies in the area, and by retaining storage and distribution facilities and employment on site, would tend to reduce the overall need to travel for customers, suppliers and staff. It would thereby support a valued local community facility in a sustainable and highly accessible location, and would ensure the continued retail vitality and viability of the St Johns Close local shopping centre.



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Revision	Date	Description

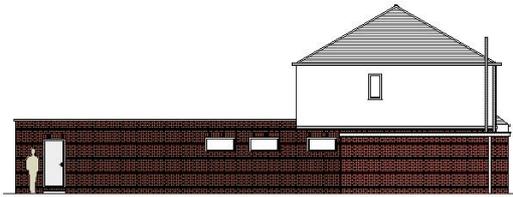
**Project Title**  
 EATON PHARMACY  
 1 ST JOHN'S CLOSE  
 NORWICH  
 NORFOLK  
 NR1 2AD  
**CLIENT: MR. & MRS. WHYATT**

**Drawing Title**  
 PROPOSED PLANS & ELEVATIONS  
**Project Stage**  
 PLANNING APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL

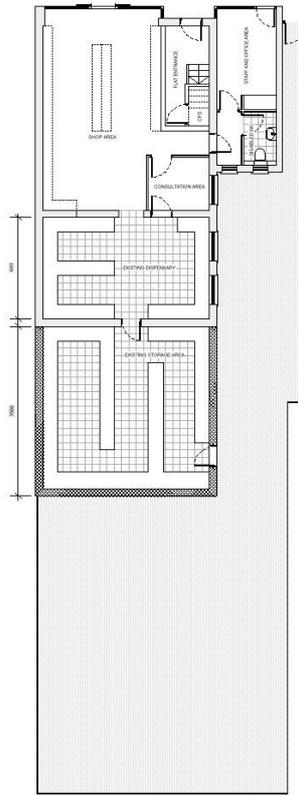
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**Drawing No.** 21.102



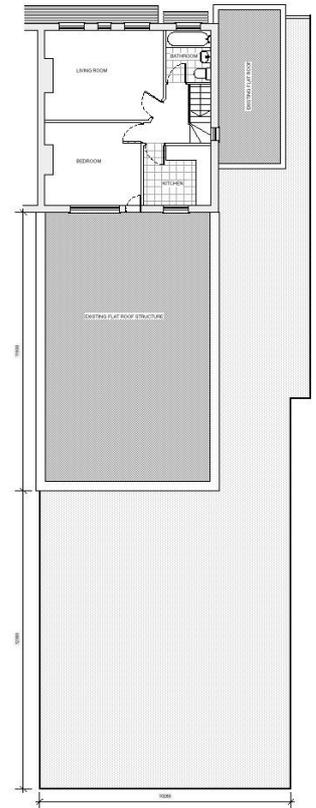
EXISTING FRONT ELEVATION



EXISTING SOUTH ELEVATION



EXISTING GROUND FLOOR SHOP, DISPENSARY & STORAGE AREA



EXISTING FIRST FLOOR FLAT & ROOF



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Revision	Date	Description

Project Title  
**EATON PHARMACY**  
**1 ST JOHN'S CLOSE**  
**NORWICH**  
**NORFOLK**  
**NR1 2AD**  
  
CLIENT: **MR. & MRS. WHYATT**

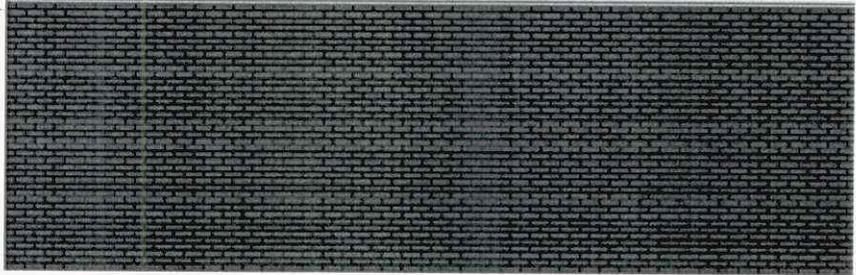
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**EXISTING**  
**PLANS & ELEVATIONS**  
  
Project Stage  
**PLANNING APPLICATION**  
**FOR APPROVAL**

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Issue Date:  
01.03.10  
  
Drawing No.  
21.101

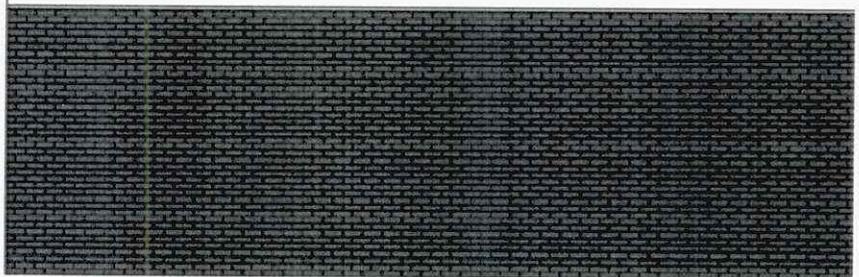
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12 APR 2010

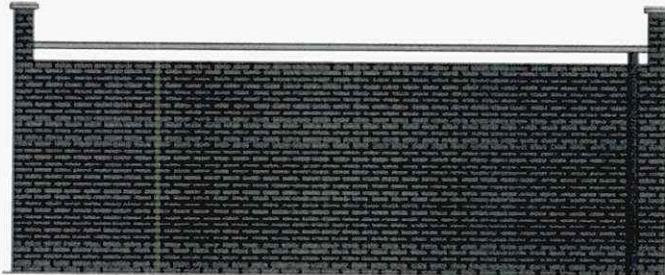
Post Room



EXISTING NORTH ELEVATION



PROPOSED NORTH ELEVATION



EXISTING & PROPOSED WEST ELEVATION

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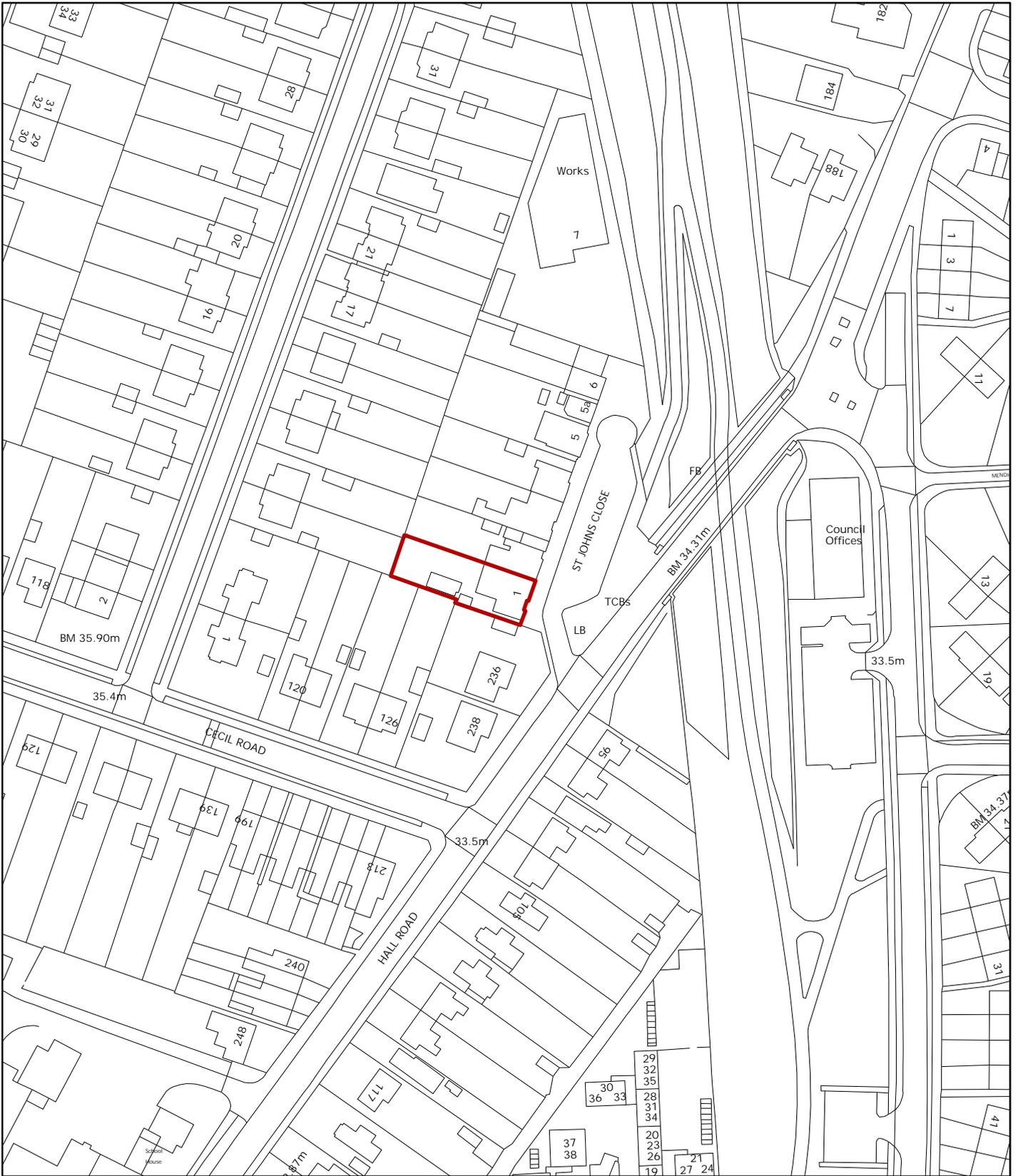
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Planning Application No - 10/00464/F  
 Site Address - 1 St Johns Close  
 Scale - 1:1,250



**NORWICH**  
**City Council**  
**PLANNING SERVICES**

