#### **Report for Resolution**

Report to Date		
Report of	Head of Planning Services	5(3)
Subject	10/02196/F Garages In Front Of 216 - 246 Bowers Avenue Norwich	

## SUMMARY

Description:	Redevelopment of site to provide 7 No. houses and 8 No. flats		
	and 28 No. storage lockers.		
Reason for	City Council led development		
consideration at	Objection to application		
Committee:			
Recommendation:	Approve subject to conditions and a S106 Agreement		
Ward:	Mile Cross		
Contact Officer:	Mr Lee Cook Senior Planner 01603 212536		
Date of receipt:	16th December 2010		
Applicant:	Orwell Housing Association Limited		
Agent:	Barefoot and Gilles Limited		

# INTRODUCTION

## The Site Location and Content

- The site lies to the south side of Bowers Avenue within an established residential area. This area along Bowers Avenue is a more recent 1960's addition. The area contains a mix of house types with flats to the west and terraced houses to the north. The housing is made up of terraces with staggered frontages stepping down from the road and the flats are arranged as blocks around green spaces.
- 2. Housing to the south and east is within the Mile Cross conservation area and the boundary to this area runs along the rear garden line of houses adjoining the site. The site is surrounded by several trees and green spaces and mature trees are located to the north edge of the site. The site currently accommodates 75 garages and 28 storage lockers.
- 3. The site currently has 2 entrance/exit points which link with the internal U shape roadway giving access to the garages and to the adjacent flats. The existing garage court also gives partial access to the 4 storey flats to the west. Bowers Avenue runs past the north edge of the site and access into this part of the estate is from the south west or via Appleyard Crescent to the east. Parking for existing dwellings is from surface or garage parking along Bowers Avenue.

## Constraints

4. The area to the south and east of the site forms the Mile Cross conservation area (policy HBE8). A designated green link runs through the adjacent green for the flats to the west of the site (policy SR12).

## Topography

5. The site slopes slightly south-north and has an existing landscape/verge area to its northern boundary.

## **Planning History**

- 6. The dwellings and garages on this part of the estate were approved in 1965 and formed part of the development for this area in the mid 1960's. Discussions have taken place with Strategic Housing and recently with the applicant concerning the potential of this and other nearby garage sites for redevelopment.
- 7. The application is one of a series of applications by Orwell Housing for sites currently owned by Norwich City Council. NCC has entered into an agreement with the Homes and Communities Agency with an initial objective for the delivery of at least 100 new affordable dwellings with Orwell having been selected as the provider of these.
- 8. A pre-application Consultation Event was held on 17th November 2010 at the Norman Centre, Bignold Road, Norwich. This event was held from 2pm-4pm and 5pm-7pm with representatives from NCC Housing Dept, Orwell Housing and Barefoot and Gilles Architects. No response forms were received by the applicant from this event for the Bowers Avenue site.
- 9. The initial consultation scheme was for a proposal for 18 units on this site; however, following discussions the density of development has been reduced to 15 units to respond to site limitations.

## **Equality and Diversity Issues**

There are no significant equality or diversity issues.

## The Proposal

10. This particular application is for the provision of a terrace of 7 houses (3 with two bedrooms, 2 with three bedrooms and 2 with four bedrooms) and blocks of flats at either end of the terrace giving 5 two bedroom flats. There is also a stand alone block of 3 one bedroom flats on the north-west corner of the site. The scheme includes associated parking, servicing and garden areas. 28 storage lockers are also being provided for local use in lieu of those being removed.

## **Application Representations Received**

11. Advertised on site and in the press and adjacent and neighbouring properties have been notified in writing. 1 letter of representation has been received citing the issues as summarised in the table below.

Issues Raised	Response
Parking is already a major issue, with people double parking and/or parking on grass due to a chronic lack of spaces, something needs doing about the parking problems before even thinking of building more houses.	Paras 14, 30, 31, 41, 42 and 43

12. **The Norwich Society:** The Committee viewed the various garage sites that are to be developed for "affordable" housing. As the ratio of garages occupied is low it seems sensible to use the land for housing. As a committee, we generally approve of the designs, though they are safe without much inspiration on the whole.

## **Consultation Responses**

- 13. **Transportation:** There is some adopted highway within this site. Fortunately it does not impact significantly on the proposal, and will not require to be stopped up. It includes the footway that runs down the eastern boundary of the site to the electricity sub station, and the 'circular' footpath to the north of the eastern block of garages surrounding the tree.
- 14. I have no objection in principle to this proposal. Alternative garaging for existing tenants on this site is available nearby. Layout is in principle acceptable, but the access should be provided to adoptable standard and offered for adoption in due course. This means that the door from the cycle shed (units 13-15) must be changed. The cycle shed to block 1-3 really ought to be better related to the entrance. Again, I would recommend that each flat is given an individual external store, which is more flexible for occupiers than a communal cycle shed. I would recommend that parking spaces for units 1-12 are placed so that they are better related to the properties that they serve and then to lose the duplication of footways across the front of the houses, and provide a small area of defensible space.
- 15. The bin arrangements for the existing flats need further thought. Communal bins for the flats are fine; stores need to be capable of providing each of the 3 flat blocks, a 660 litre bin for general waste, and 3 250 litres for recyclables, and for the two flat block, a 360 litre bin, the food waste 250 litre bin, and two 125 litre bins for the recycling. The bin stores need to be designed to accommodate these accordingly. I don't mind the bin stores for the houses being in the back gardens, but if they are, then there needs to be somewhere for them to stand awaiting collection at the end of the path leading to the frontage. (The scheme has subsequently been amended to take account of the above comments).
- 16. This application will attract a transport Contribution of £4232.25.
- 17. **Pollution Control Officer:** The residential end-use is a sensitive one, and there is a possibility of contamination due to the current or previous uses. I have therefore suggested conditions for a site investigation to determine this. I have also suggested a condition for light nuisance along with informatives for the demolition and construction phases.
- 18. **Design and Conservation:** In urban design terms the scheme now works quite well. The division between public and private space is quite coherent, with private gardens backing onto existing gardens, limited boundaries between private space and public

space, and overlooking of public space by flats. It is good that bollards are to be installed for the verges fronting Bowers Avenue as parking on verges is a problem in the area. Generally the scale and massing of the development is appropriate for the context, and should tie in with the neighbouring flat roof block, as well as the more traditional roof-scape of the buildings within the conservation area to the east.

- 19. Some points of concern: A path runs directly in front of all of the houses with no defensible space, this will give a hard urban appearance. There are however two paths either side of the parking spaces, the outer path could potentially be lost allowing the parking spaces to be brought forward or the rear path could be treated with a slightly different materials so that it is associated with the houses rather than the wider space; The car parking space at the south end of the site could be protected by hedge/low wall as the path runs directly alongside; The cycle store for flats 1-3 and 11-12 could be included within the envelope of the building and make it more secure and more likely to be used by residents; There is a hedge proposed to the right of the path leading to the adjacent flats. This is a semi-public space and overlooked by the flats and used by its residents, so this hedge should only be relatively low in height. The proposed south elevation appears a little plain, unfortunate as it overlooks a public space and footpath, can this elevation not also have the timber or render treatment to make it more visually interesting? Conditions will need to look carefully at the location of downpipes on the front elevation, and the current drawings do not show downpipes. (The scheme has subsequently been amended to take account of the above comments).
- 20. **Arboricultural Officer:** The proposed changes around T2 will probably, generally be beneficial if carried out in accord with the AIA & AMS as the rooting area for the tree will be improved; the placing of the car parking spaces will be acceptable as their position is where there is existing hard standing. There is no mention in the AMS of the timber bollards proposed within the RPA; a specific supplementary AMS will be needed for their installation. All demolition and construction within RPAs will need to be under arboricultural supervision and an auditable system of arboricultural site monitoring should be required. The Lime tree proposed for removal is a B category tree; retention of this tree and more of the green space around it would be preferable to the proposal to remove and replace, however this is something I shall discuss with the Council's arboricultural officer given the local potential for possible gains in terms of tree cover. With regard to the new trees indicated, there should be provision for below ground improvements to be built in when landscape detail is submitted. Also needs to be clear who will own and manage the trees post development.
- 21. The scheme should attract monies for trees under policy NE4 in this case being for 7 new trees planted close to the site.
- 22. **Natural Areas Officer:** Apart from the individual trees present, this site currently has negligible biodiversity value and the proposed development offers an opportunity to enhance this. The measures outlined in the arboricultural statement for protecting the trees to be retained should be closely followed, and new planting should include a proportion of appropriate native trees and shrubs, and/or species with flowers or berries attractive to wildlife.
- 23. The inclusion of a shrub component in the new planting would be especially beneficial to House Sparrow, as the Mile Cross area appears to be a remaining stronghold in Norwich for this now declining species. Japanese Privet is a particular favourite of

House Sparrow, but most shrub species are likely to have some value for it.

- 24. Strategic Housing: I can confirm that the Housing Development team fully support the application for 15 new dwellings at the Bowers Avenue garage site. This site is owned by Norwich City Council and was identified by the Housing Development Team as an excellent site for the development of affordable housing, due to the condition and under occupation of the garages on site. The current application has been put together by Orwell Housing Association in partnership with the Housing Development Team and in consultation with the planning department. There is a great need for new affordable housing in Norwich with the Housing Needs and Stock Condition survey identifying a need for 677 new affordable homes to be developed in Norwich each year. The Bowers Avenue development will go some way to help meet this need. The wide property mix of one, two, three and four bedroom properties was agreed with the housing development team and meets the identified need within the strategic housing market assessment.
- 25. A public consultation was held on 17<sup>th</sup> November at the Norman Centre, Bignold Road, Norwich with garage tenants and local residents prior to the application. The consultation was for three sites within the vicinity including this one and a total of 166 residents were invited. There were no feedback forms completed for this site.
- 26. This site currently consists of 75 garages of which seventeen are currently occupied. There are currently 24 empty garages in close proximity to this site so all of the existing tenants will be able to be relocated within a small distance. In addition once the future of the three sites with garages in this vicinity are decided the council will offer any remaining garages for rent to local residents which will hopefully alleviate the existing parking issues in the area.
- 27. The scheme proposed is of a high quality and will meet Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4. Given the need for high quality affordable homes in this area and given that this scheme has been worked up in conjunction with the Housing Development Team, we fully support this application.

# ASSESSMENT OF PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

## **Relevant Planning Policies**

## **Relevant National Planning Policies**

- PPS1 **Delivering Sustainable Development** PPS1 Supplement Planning and Climate Change
- PPS3 Housing
- PPG13 Transport

# **Relevant Strategic Regional Planning Policies**

- ENV7 Quality in the built environment
- T14 Parking
- H2 Affordable Housing.
- Waste Management in Development WM6

## **Relevant Local Plan Policies**

- EP1: Contaminated Land
- High standard of energy efficiency for new development EP18:
- EP20: Sustainable use of materials
- EP22: High standard of amenity for residential occupiers
- HBE12: Design

- HBE19: Design for safety and security including minimising crime
- HOU13: Proposals for new housing development on other sites
- NE4: Street tree contributions
- NE9: Comprehensive landscaping scheme and tree planting
- SR7: Provision of children's equipped playspace
- TRA5: Approach to design for vehicle movement and special needs
- TRA6: Parking standards maxima
- TRA7: Cycle parking standards
- TRA8: servicing standards

TRA11: Contributions for transport improvements in the wider area

## Supplementary Planning Documents and Guidance

Trees and Development SPD – September 2007

Open Space and Play SPD – June 2006

Transport Contributions - Draft January 2006

Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy SPD – December 2006

Accessible and Special Needs Housing SPD – June 2006

## **Principle of Development**

## **Policy Considerations**

- 28. The site is part of an area shown for future residential redevelopment within the sites allocation DPD currently at consultation. The proposals will provide 15 dwellings within a current underused brown field site. The re-use of land is encouraged under policy and the scheme provides 15 dwellings at approximately 45 dwellings to the hectare. The scheme is laid out to respect amenity and landscape features in the area and has adequate garden space and provision for parking and servicing. As such the scheme accords with local and national policies for development and re-use of land. The scheme is for a social housing provider which will assist in adding to the stock of affordable housing in this area.
- 29. National policy in PPG13 has recently changed to remove the requirement for councils to limit the number of parking spaces allowed in new residential developments and placing the onus on councils and communities to adopt policies appropriate for their area. Currently saved and adopted local plan polices remain in place which set out maximum parking standards for the City. There are no planning policies which seek the retention of parking or garaging provision. However, it is appropriate on a case by case basis to consider whether the loss of the garaging provision would have other material or detrimental effects on the locality
- 30. In this case the garages in question are believed to be approximately 77% void. Other garage spaces are available within the area and as part of the proposal it is intended to provide some additional parking spaces within the adjacent roadway to help manage parking on the highway. It is not therefore considered that the loss of the garages would have any significant implications in terms of highway congestion or safety.

## **Impact on Living Conditions**

## Overshadowing, Overlooking, Loss of Privacy and Disturbance

31. Various issues related to layout and impact on amenity have been assessed and have been part of ongoing discussions with the agent to overcome any local concerns. The scheme provides a linear arrangement of buildings to one edge of the site with the front elevation facing west onto the new roadway and side elevations into the communal garden spaces. The new terrace provides a garden to garden relationship along the east edge of the site. This arrangement follows the general layout of housing within the area.

- 32. The single block of flats steps forward on the site facing Bowers Avenue and in small part looks south towards a blank gable of the nearby flats. Overall the buildings are situated sufficiently forward and away from side boundaries to avoid any significant overlooking of private areas to adjacent properties.
- 33. Careful consideration has been given to the relationship of the proposed buildings to the surrounding area. The proposed layout achieves appropriate distances between new and existing buildings and does not as a result create overshadowing or overlooking problems.
- 34. The scheme provides a reasonable standard of living and garden spaces which would provide an attractive living environment and which would integrate well with the character of the area. The scheme also enhances the green space and links at the southern end of the site which will also provide benefits for the existing block of flats adjacent to the site.

## Design

## Site Layout and Building Design

- 35. The proposed layout has been revised following negotiations. The site is of an awkward shape and development is further complicated by building relationships in terms of height. The scheme shows the main housing block fronting onto the new roadway and is designed to take advantage of this space without creating a scheme which is overly dominated by parking courts or excessive road coverage for turning space. The main Bowers Avenue frontage will have two 3 storey buildings and the new avenue will step down in height into the site also creating an interesting crescent terrace line running to the south.
- 36. The terrace is designed to provide each element with private gardens and overall the buildings are laid out to provide additional green areas which benefit both existing and future residents. Enhancements to planting to the north of the site and along the new road and link paths are also proposed. The entrance to house rear gardens is positioned centrally on the terrace frontage and following revisions better defined front areas provided to give a better linkage to front doors and parking spaces for each unit. The turning head fits into the road line and parking area for the single block of flats and the road continues down the site to maintain access to entrances and bins for the existing flats in the area. The road is designed to take on the operation of a "home zone" and in the detailing and additional landscaping should create an attractive street frontage.
- 37. There is a mix of building styles in the area which changes from mainly two storey houses to four storey flats with various architectural styles and features. The site is adjacent to the Mile Cross conservation area. The scheme is appropriate in scale and form and steps between building forms in the area in an appropriate manner without dominating the area or creating amenity issues. The scheme proposes relatively simple forms of domestic dwellings using simple pitched roofs and a limited range of building materials to the walls, joinery and details. It is suggested that details of materials form a condition of any consent. Subject to these details the design is considered to be appropriate.
- 38. The buildings footprints have been designed to give each block a good setting and space within the new street scene. The development also seeks to retain some of the mature trees on the site which will be enhanced by additional landscaping. Again details are suggested covering hard and soft landscaping for the site.

## **Transport and Access**

#### Vehicular Access and Servicing

- 39. As it serves more than 8 dwellings, then there is a requirement in design standards for the road to be to adoptable levels. The scheme provides a single access point which reuses part of the existing western access. This links onto the end of the new highway which is intended to use a different palette of materials to slow vehicle traffic and create a more pedestrian friendly area. The layout provides a new parking area to the single detached block of flats and further parking in front of the terrace along the eastern edge of the new roadway. Access to the sub-station is retained and buildings positioned to ensure that there is no conflict between uses of the site. Highways officers have reviewed the scheme and regard it as being of an acceptable design and size for the development proposed.
- 40. The parking court doubles as a turning area for larger delivery vehicles. This helps maximise site potential while creating an attractive space as well as ensuring parking space for future residents is overlooked and more secure. Other on street parking is revised and 3 spaces provided within the current eastern access point. The new access is adequate for the purposes and numbers involved in the development and parking can still take place within the area without detriment to safety or access.

## Car Parking, Servicing and Cycling Parking

- 41. Proposed levels of parking are in line with the maximum suggested in Appendix 4 of the Adopted Local Plan and as such this level of provision accords with local policy and advice on encouraging sustainable modes of transport and car usage. Parking is provided at a 1:1 basis together with a total of 6 extra spaces within the scheme and stopped up access on the north east corner of the site. The design of the road might also afford a few informal parking areas for use by residents.
- 42. Each property has been designed with sufficient space to accommodate the bin requirement for the site. Each block of flats has a communal store and each house has space within gardens for bins and a collection point adjacent to the roadway for use on collection days. Following discussion access routes for bins and servicing have been rationalised and designed to incorporate easy access to the new highway and as such will make an adequate provision for servicing.
- 43. Adequate cycle storage has also been built into the scheme with the potential for access straight into garden spaces for the houses rather than through buildings. The store areas for the flats have been revised to create a useable space close to the stairwell entrance to each block of flats. These aspects of the development enhance the design and operation of the scheme and long term amenity value for the residents.

## **Environmental Issues**

## Site Contamination and Remediation

44. A desk based assessment has been submitted with the application which identifies potential pollutants at the site. Given the sensitive residential end use it is considered necessary to condition a site investigation and a scheme of remediation and mitigation to be carried out as appropriate.

## **Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy**

45. An energy efficiency statement has been submitted with the scheme to show how 10% energy generation will be met on site in accordance with policy ENG1 of the East of England Plan. This is shown as being achieved through the installation of PV's to the roof area with sufficient coverage to meet the needs of each unit.

46. Additionally, the design and access statement submitted with the application details that the applicants are committed to achieving code for sustainable homes level 4. The agent has also advised that the development will additionally aim to improve construction design to further reduce the end use requirement for energy.

#### Lighting

47. On site lighting to external spaces, the realigned footpath and access and individual lights to the proposed dwellings could potentially cause amenity and design issues for the area. The new roadway also needs to be to adoptable standard with appropriate lighting to serve this requirement. Insufficient information is available at the present time and it is therefore suggested that conditions are imposed requiring details to be agreed for the final scheme to ensure appropriate design, location and levels of illumination.

## **Trees and Landscaping**

## Loss of Trees or Impact on Trees

48. The scheme is designed to take account of and seeks to retain the larger B class tree on the site frontage. Development sits back from the road thereby retaining the amenity and ecological value of this tree. It will be important however to ensure that this tree is retained in good health and conditions are suggested to protect the tree during construction. As suggested by the arboricultural officer further information should be provided to detail works beneath the tree canopy and within the verge area and again this is suggested as a condition.

#### **Replacement Planting**

- 49. The arboricultural report identifies the individual value of trees and whilst there are other existing trees within the verge to the north as a result of discussion about the scheme it is intended to remove the tree to the west of the access and replant with new species within the verge. The scheme also now shows an avenue line of trees along the new roadway at spaces which will correlate with new parking access points. There is also additional green areas and a suggested improved link to the footpath to the south.
- 50. The resulting planting will improve the street scene and add value to landscape diversity within the area and the sites linkages with those existing to the west. To ensure an appropriate scheme is provided conditions are suggested requiring new landscaping and the replacement of trees and landscaping in accordance with a scheme to be agreed.

#### **Biodiversity**

51. Commentary has been provided with the application which has assessed the site as having little biodiversity or ecology value. There is potential to improve the site and to enhance green linkages which run to the west of the site between Mile Cross and Boundary Road. It is suggested that it would be appropriate to take up the suggestions in the ecology report and to impose conditions requesting enhancements of some nesting and planting conditions on and around the site.

## **Planning Obligations**

#### **Tree Contributions**

52. As the proposal provides for a development of a design and frontage width which has landscape enhancement implications, a contribution towards additional trees, in the form of a commuted payment, would normally be required under Policy NE4. The arboricultural officer, following assessment of on-site loss and impacts on the area, has identified that there is a need for additional tree planting within the area close to the application site which will require Council planting and maintenance. On the basis of the information provided a tree contribution of £4,264.00 for seven trees would

currently be sought.

#### **Transportation Contributions**

53. As the proposal is for a development of more than 10 dwellings a contribution towards transportation improvements, in the form of a commuted payment, would normally be required under Policy TRA11. The transportation officer, following assessment of the scheme and impacts on the area, has identified that there is a need for a contribution of £4,232.25.

#### **Open Space and Play Equipment**

54. The proposal also provides in excess of ten child bed spaces and a contribution towards child play space improvements, in the form of a commuted payment, would normally be required under Policy SR7. The northern area of Norwich has recently been assessed in terms of play space provision. The site is within Mile Cross ward where there is some child play provision with 5 recorded play areas and at present it has been identified that there is a shortfall in provision by about 2 hectares. There is therefore a recorded deficit in provision for the area and on the basis of the information provided a Child Play Space contribution of £20,610.00 would currently be sought.

## Conclusions

- 55. The proposed scheme provides an arrangement of 15 dwellings with associated parking and servicing. The buildings respond to the constraints and topography of the site, retains existing trees and would lead to an attractive development in accordance with local and national policy. The scheme should also enhance the use of the footpath links and potentially increase security in this area. The scheme also provides for appropriate contributions to meet tree planting, transportation improvements and child play needs in the area.
- 56. The development of 15 affordable dwellings would contribute to the promotion of affordable housing in Norwich. The proposed development achieves a high standard of design and would be well integrated with the surrounding area.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

To approve Application No 10/02196/F Garages in front of 216 - 246 Bowers Avenue Norwich and grant planning permission, subject to subject to

- (1) the completion of a satisfactory S106 agreement to include the provision of contributions to sustainable transportation improvements, street trees and children's play provision, and
- (2) the following conditions:-
- 1. Commencement of development within three years
- 2. Details of Facing and Roofing Materials; Boundary treatment, walls and fences; external lighting; solar panels and fixings
- 3. Details of car parking, cycle storage, bin stores, access road
- 4. Details of scheme for Arboricultural Method Statement; arboricultural site monitoring
- 5. Compliance with AIA, AMS and Tree Protection Scheme implemented prior to commencement
- 6. Retention of tree protection
- 7. Details of Landscaping, planting and site treatment works
- 8. Landscape maintenance
- 9. Provision of renewable energy sources
- 10. Site contamination investigation and assessment to be carried out and if

contamination is found a scheme of remediation and mitigation to be agreed and carried out. Should during development, contamination not previously identified be found development is to cease pending details to deal with contamination.

- 11. Details of biodiversity enhancements
- 12. Drawing numbers

Reasons for approval:

The development of 15 affordable dwellings would contribute to the promotion of affordable housing in Norwich. The proposed development, subject to conditions, would be well integrated with the surrounding development in form and layout and would make good use of this brown field site. The scheme provides adequate parking and servicing space and makes proposals for rationalising on street parking in the area. The scheme is laid out to retain existing trees around the site and also allows potential for further landscape and biodiversity enhancement to improve the amenity of the area. The scheme also provides for appropriate contributions to meet tree planting, transportation improvements and child play needs in the area. The decision has been made with particular regard to PPS1, PPS3 and PPG13 policies ENV7, T14, H2 and WM6 of the adopted East of England Plan and saved policies EP1, EP18, EP22, HOU13, HBE12, HBE19, EP22, NE4, NE9, SR7, TRA5, TRA6, TRA7, TRA8 and TRA11 of the City of Norwich Local Plan (Adopted Version 2004) and to all material planning considerations

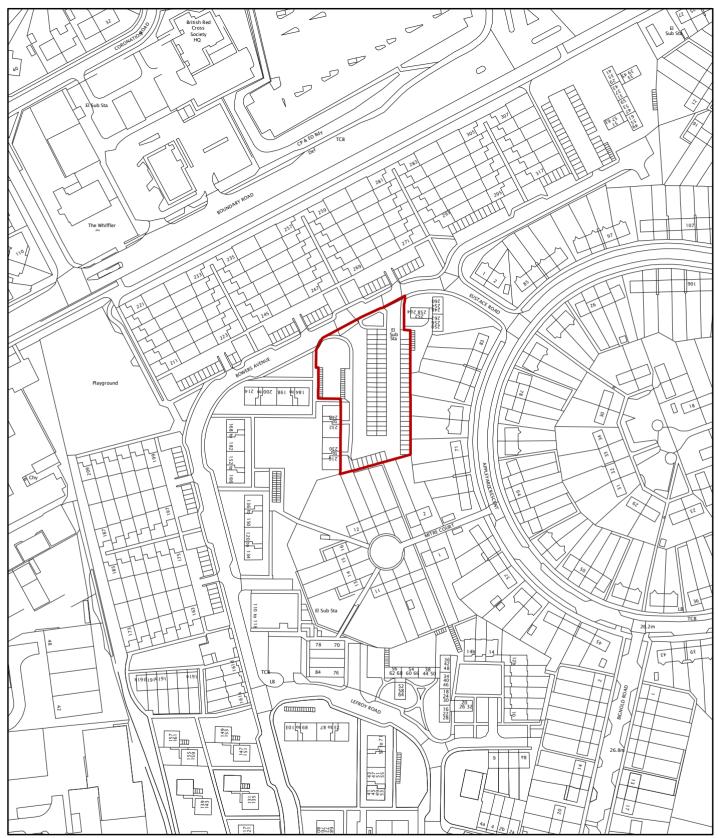
The following informative notes should be appended to any consent:

1. Considerate construction and timing to prevent nuisance;

2. An asbestos survey should be carried out;

3. Materials removed from site should be classified and disposed of at suitable licensed facilities;

4. Site clearance to have due regard to minimising the impact on wildlife.



© Crown Copyright 2011 All rights reserved. Licence No. 100019747

Planning Application No10/02196/FSite AddressGarages in front of 216-246 Bowers AvenueScale1:2,000





**PLANNING SERVICES** 







