

Planning Applications Committee

19 February 2009

Section C

Agenda Number:	C2
Section/Area: I	Inner
Ward:	Mancroft
Officer:	Gary Howe
Valid Date:	1 January 2009
Application Number:	08/01344/C
Site Address :	Public Convenience St Benedicts Street Norwich
Proposal:	Demolition of disused public toilets.
Applicant:	Broadland Housing Association
Agent:	Ingleton Wood LLP

THE SITE

This application relates to a disused local authority public convenience located at the bottom of Grapes Hill near the junction with St Benedicts Street and Wellington Lane. The site is within the City Centre Conservation Area and in the Elm Hill and Maddermarket character area of the Norwich City Centre Conservation Area Appraisal. The remains of the City Wall (Scheduled Ancient Monument) is located just to the south of the public convenience and the line of the City Wall passes to the east of the structure.

PLANNING HISTORY

It is thought that the public convenience was constructed in the 1950's. The toilet has been closed since 1997.

THE PROPOSAL

It is proposed to demolish the public convenience.

CONSULTATIONS

Advertised in the press and on site: Two letters of representation received on the following grounds:-

- Loss of unique type of building, very few of which are left in the city;
- These sort of buildings should be retained and re-used, possibly for another use;
- These building have a special history of there own which should be retained;
- There is a lack of public toilets which need to be scattered round the city;
- Council should not neglect these buildings and toilet facilities in general.

Norfolk Landscape Archaeology: Require conditions relating to the need for archaeological monitoring of the demolition works by an archaeological contractor

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Relevant National Planning Policies

PPG15 – Planning and the Historic Environment
PPG16 – Archaeology and Planning

Relevant East of England Plan Policies

ENV6 – The Historic Environment
ENV7 – Quality in the Built Environment

Relevant Replacement Local Plan Policies

HBE1 – Protection of Scheduled Ancient Monuments
HBE3 – Archaeological assessment in the Area of Main Archaeological Interest
HBE8 – Enhancement of Conservation Areas

Supplementary Planning Documents and other Guidance

Norwich City Centre Conservation Area Appraisal

Issues relating to public safety and need

This Council owned public convenience has been closed since 1997 and it followed lengthy discussions with the police who were concerned that the building was being used for 'inappropriate behaviour'. The layout of the toilets does not allow for this problem to be 'designed out'. The toilets have also suffered from repeated vandalism and were little used by members of the public. New toilet facilities are now provided within the St Andrews Car Park. It is hoped that in the future, new public toilets may be provided on the Barn Road Car Park site if it is redeveloped.

Conservation and Demolition

Although the design of the toilets is a carefully considered one for its period it is not considered that the building is worthy of retention in architectural terms. The site itself is an important gateway to the City centre, adjacent to the historic City Wall and the former location of St Benedict's Gate. The current building and landscaping obscure much of this wall so that it is neither very visible nor prominent in the approach to the City centre. Now that the toilets are falling into a state of disrepair their current condition can be considered to have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area and the setting of the City Wall. There is therefore an opportunity here to not only improve the setting of the Scheduled Ancient Monument, but also improve views into the City Centre Conservation Area. In this instance it is considered that the City Wall is by far the more historically significant structure and this needs protecting in preference to the much later public convenience building, even though it has some architectural interest for its time.

It is recommended that a condition requiring that the existing public toilet building is recorded is included and that there is also a condition to ensure that there is some historic interpretation relating to the site of the City Wall and the former St Benedict's gate. There should also be a condition relating to any disturbance to the City Wall being made good using traditional repair techniques, and that appropriate landscaping replaces the footprint of the convenience.

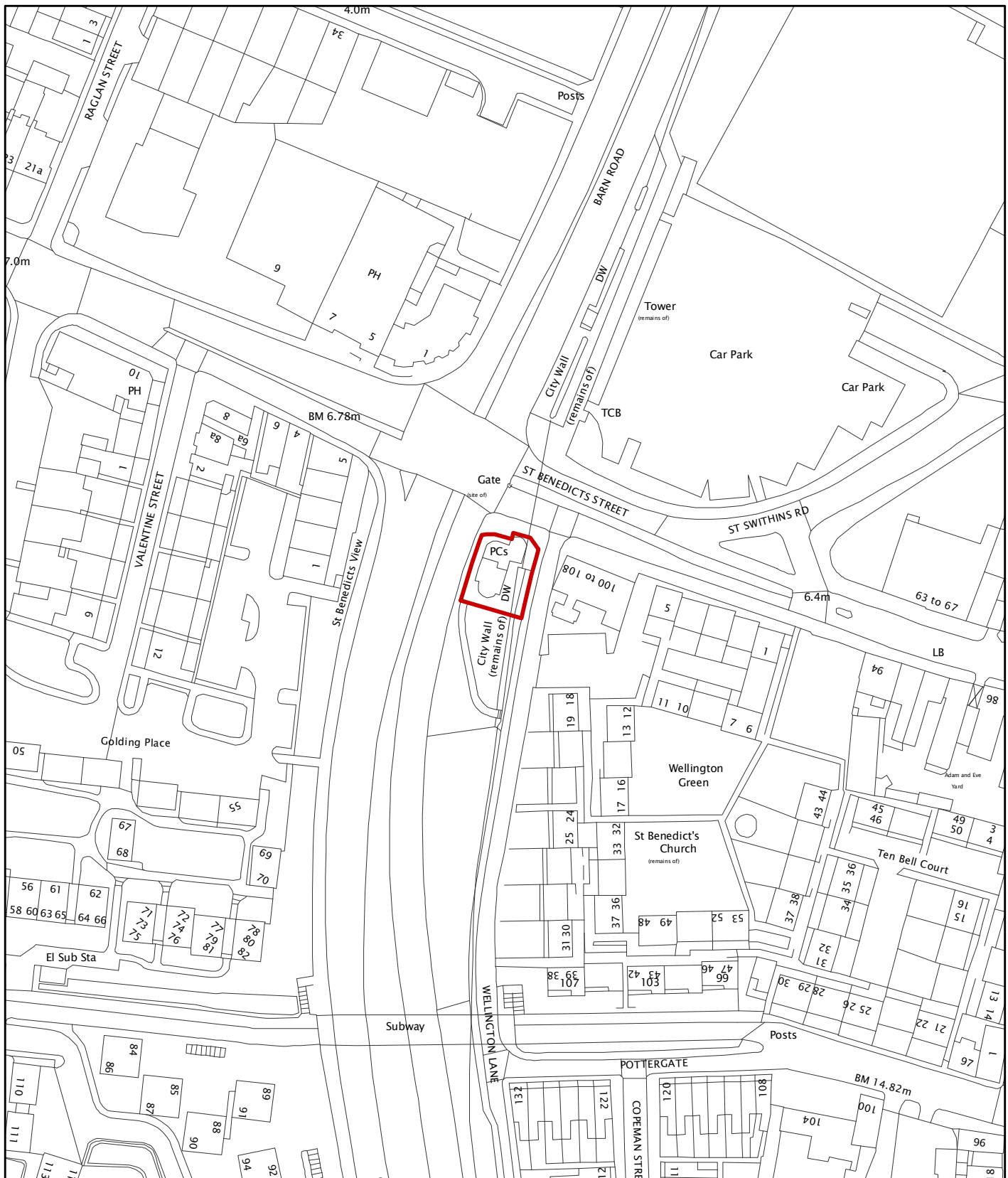
RECOMMENDATIONS

GRANT Conservation Area Consent subject to the following conditions:

1. Commencement within 3 years;
2. Recording;
3. Heritage Interpretation;
4. Any damage to be made good;
5. Landscaping

Reasons for Approval

The decision to grant conservation area consent has been taken having regard to saved policies HBE1, HBE3, HBE8 of the City of Norwich Replacement Local Plan (Adopted November 2004), policies ENV6 and ENV7 of the East of England Plan, PPG15 and PPG16 and all material considerations.



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Site Address - Public Convenience, St Benedicts Street, Norwich

Scale - 1:1250



NORWICH
City Council

DIRECTORATE OF REGENERATION
AND DEVELOPMENT

