

**Report to** Planning applications committee  
**Date** 18 April 2013  
**Report of** Head of planning services  
**Subject** 13/00113/F and 13/00115/L  
 Fire Station, Bethel Street, Norwich, NR2 1NW

**Item**  
**5(3)**

## SUMMARY

<b>Description:</b>	<p>13/00113/F: Change of use of Fire Station (Class Sui Generis) to 2,900 sq.m. GIA Sixth Form Free School (Class D1) with conversion works including external alterations and including new vertical external extension to provide new staircase and lift core and elevated corridors within proposed atrium and a new glazed infill extension beneath existing canopy. New landscaping to inner courtyard and building frontage on Bethel Street to include reinstating public footpath and providing street trees.</p> <p>13/00115/L: Conversion works including internal alteration, demolition and subdivision, and construction of vertical extension to provide new staircase, lift and corridors within proposed atrium, and glazed canopy infill extensions and curtilage landscaping, to facilitate change of use from fire station to school.</p>	
<b>Reason for consideration at Committee:</b>	Contrary to Policy; Objections;	
<b>Recommendation:</b>	Approve	
<b>Ward:</b>	Mancroft	
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Rob Parkinson	Senior Planning Officer 01603 212765
<b>Valid Date:</b>	8th February 2013	
<b>Applicant:</b>	Dr Mark Evans	
<b>Agent:</b>	Mr Chris Gilbert	

## INTRODUCTION

### The Site

#### Location and Context

1. The Norwich Fire Station is a Grade II Listed Building on Bethel Street and was vacated when the Fire Service relocated to new premises at Trowse in 2011. It was originally constructed as part of the 1930s Civic Quarter group of buildings, including the City Hall and Police Station.
2. This part of the city centre is a mix of uses with residential properties close by. Neighbours immediately east are the police station and its parking / holding compound, and the City Hall, both of which are Listed Buildings. Immediately north are the ten Old Barley Market three-storey town houses. Residential and office

uses extend along Bethel Street to the west, including on the south side of the road at the former Bethel Hospital, although the immediate neighbour is the Country and Eastern retail premises at the former ice rink. Opposite the main Fire Station building on Bethel Street is the entrance to the Forum Car Park and pedestrian route to Theatre Street behind the Forum building.

3. The Fire Station is a complex of linked brick-built buildings creating a horseshoe courtyard. The main tender house engine building is the four-storey building on the south side fronting Bethel Street, set back from the road edge but accessed via the tall glass doors opening directly onto Bethel Street, formerly hosting engines and plant in the atrium at ground level with recreation area, kitchens and dormitories in the two floors above. The western building is a four and five-storey garage and pump store with dormitory space above. The north range of buildings is a two-storey garage area dominated by its 5-storey brick-built tower designed in an Italianate campanile style, and similar in some respects, such as its historic brick detailing, to the City Hall tower. The historic Weights and Measures building also forms part of this northern range, being attached at its east end and accessed from both the eastern driveway and courtyard. It functioned originally as a separate building.
4. The courtyard was last used for staff car parking, accessed from the east and the private drive shared access used also by the police service. A private but shared access drive lies to the west of the fire station leading to the Old Barley Market houses with access available to the adjoining retail premises; a part of this drive behind the western part of the building is also used for fire service staff parking.

### **Constraints and Topography**

5. The Fire Station was designated as a Grade II Listed Building in October 2008, and lies within the designated City Centre Conservation Area, being characterised within the Conservation Area Appraisal as within the civic conservation character area. The site is also within the existing Local Plan's defined Area of Main Archaeological Interest (Local Plan policy HBE3), Visitor Attraction Area (policy TVA4), City Centre Leisure Area (policy AEC1), and Cultural and Civic Area (policy CC3).
6. This is a level site although the buildings are somewhat taller than their neighbours to the north, south and west

### **Planning History**

There had been some minor installations and works to the building whilst in use as a fire station, but a new use had only been first proposed in 2010 for extensive conversion and change of use for a mixed use residential-led development, as below:

**10/01036/F** - Conversion and alterations to the Fire Station to provide 14 no. residential units (5 no. three bedroom maisonettes, 5 no. three bedroom flats, 1 no. three bedroom house, 1 no. two bedroom flat, and 2 no. one bedroom flats), offices and either A1, A2, B1 or D1 use on the ground floor of the main building. (Approved September 2010).

**10/01037/L** - Conversion and alterations to the Fire Station to provide 14 no. residential units (5 no. three bedroom maisonettes, 5 no. three bedroom flats, 1 no. three bedroom house, 1 no. two bedroom flat, and 2 no. one bedroom flats), offices

and either A1, A2, B1 or D1 use on the ground floor of the main building. (Approved September 2011).

7. The associated alterations to the listed building were previously considered necessary to provide the mix of uses proposed and ensure the ongoing use of the premises, but were relatively minimal and could be accommodated without significant detrimental impact or harm to the building's fabric.
8. The above residential-led conversions have not been implemented but remain 'live' until August 2013. However, the building had been marketed by the previous owners the County Council and redevelopment schemes were not apparently forthcoming and the applicants now have a long-term lease on the premises.

## **Equality and Diversity Issues**

There are significant equality or diversity issues related to the abilities of the public to access the proposed school building and provide adequate emergency exit access/egress. The designs are proposed with this firmly in mind, as the scheme includes a stair and lift core tower extension and ramping system for overcoming the internal changes in levels. Further discussion is provided as part of the design and accessibility assessment below.

## **The Proposal**

9. To convert the building into a new school, inclusive of which is the addition of a tall stair and lift-core tower and a full-height exterior glazed extension across one the facades, and infilling the space underneath the canopy in the courtyard. The interior is drastically renovated and much of the interior layout is removed, albeit some of the more significant interiors are protected and unique features retained in situ. New construction includes cycle stores and restoration of the Bethel Street footpath and courtyard landscaping.

## **Pre-application discussion and consultation**

10. The applicant and local planning authority, with English Heritage, have discussed the proposals in great detail since December 2012; discussions included the importance of a sound transportation strategy and explored a number of options for design and accommodation solutions to the building's constraints. As part of the pre-application process the applicant presented their scheme in 'final draft' form to the Greater Norwich Design Review Panel and Councillors.
11. Although such feedback has not been included in the applicant's Statement of Community Involvement, the applicant has hosted a number of public workshops and some local community consultation. The results show general support, with many responses suggesting the glazed extension to the west building could even have been wider despite 'covering' the building more, and support for the enlivened Bethel Street frontage, and retention of fire station heritage in the scheme. Negative comments concerned traffic generation, congestion and 'rat runs'.
12. Members may be aware that the school have widely advertised the proposal and their expectation of the school being open by September 2013, with some students already enrolled. This is considered disingenuous – the school does not appear to have advertised its opening date as being 'subject to planning' for example – and Members are strongly advised not to give any weight to this pre-text; should the

application for change of use be considered necessary to be refused or delayed, students and the school will need to make their own arrangements for contingency.

## Representations Received

13. Advertised on site and in the press on two occasions, including when revised plans were received in mid-March. Adjacent and neighbouring properties have been notified in writing. 6 letters of representation have been received citing the issues as summarised in the table below. It should be noted that the second formal 21-day period of public consultation ends on 12<sup>th</sup> April, a few days after publication of this committee report.

14. A detailed submission has also been received from the residents and owners of the Old Barley Market housing area adjoining the fire station to the north. Many points are raised and referenced here. The table below details issues from other sources.

- This proposal, the primary school free school on Surrey Street, and the publicity given to anticipated additional free schools in Norwich city centre demonstrate a precedent being set for additional schools, but there is no evidence to show city centre populations can support new schools, and the city centre location is not necessary. There should be further debate around city centre schooling before this starts a precedent. [- See Paragraphs 29-37 (*principle*) and 39-41 (*emerging policy*)].
- Consideration in this application should be given to the future use of the vacant site opposite the fire station, a part of the former Bethel Hospital. [- See Paragraph 46].
- The application has been hastily prepared and elements are missing or inadequately prepared and due consideration has not been given to its impact on neighbouring sites or the context of civil legal and access rights in the immediate vicinity, and certain aspects of the scheme (e.g. cycle storage) may as a consequence not be practical to realise. [- See Paragraphs 15-16 (*plan preparation*) and 99-106 (*cycle stores*)].
- Cycle store provision is contradictory. City Council planning policy suggests 25% provision should be made, equating to 120 cycle spaces, whereas Norfolk standards require only 20 stands. 120 will not be possible, but 50 on-site is not enough and could result in bikes being left on the access road or chained to gates / street furniture and therefore is also an unnecessary public safety risk when using the access road, and makes access to Old Barley Market difficult, and encourages loitering and concerns around the potential for increased litter and noise and safety given the poor lighting in the access road. [- See Paragraphs 99-106 (*cycle provision*)].
- The visibility from the road is also very limited for those cycling to / from there and could be dangerous to pedestrians / vehicles. Many vehicles, busses and refuse lorries use the access road and have to reverse along it due to Old Barley Market's tight layout preventing turning. Increased use and vehicle presence is a safety concern.
- The cycle store is accessed from the private road to Old Barley Market, in separate ownership to the fire station, and has not been fully worked-up

(showing inaccurate plans). The cycle store site is also subject to existing legal restrictions and easements preventing building on that part of the site, would block intercom and access controls, and complicates existing drainage and energy supply provision. If the cycle store cannot be legally provided the scheme is compromised and the feasibility of its Travel Plan is thrown into doubt and should be addressed from the outset. [*See Paragraphs 99-106 and 132-133 (cycle store access and conditions)*].

- The new lift and stair tower is inappropriate. It would detract from the quality of the surrounding listed buildings, create a precedent for poor designs in this sensitive area and be visible from many directions (especially behind City Hall and St Giles) and interrupt the historic view of the Church of St Giles on the Hill towards the Castle. [*See Paragraphs 82-86 (design impact on conservation area)*].
  - Acoustic properties of the tower will be poor and noise will be created throughout the building's use until as late as 10pm, carrying further as height increases, and affecting the adjoining residents to the north. The tower may also affect radio and television reception. [*See Paragraphs 52-53 (noise)*].
  - The tower will block light and bring shadow to the properties and courtyard of Old Barley Market (some with south-facing Velux roof windows in the adjoining homes) and overshadow the access road. [*See Paragraphs 54-59 (design and overshadowing)*].
  - Refuse storage is inadequate and appear too small, and could become a health hazard, especially as the Travel Plan suggests only weekly collections are necessary. [*See Paragraphs 93-96 (refuse and servicing)*].
  - The Old Barley Market access road currently floods, and sewage and surface water drainage from the houses is a private arrangement which needs to be pumped uphill to Bethel Street. Sewage from the school will be greatly increased (from c.25 infrequent users at the fire station to 500 regular users of the school). Bethel Street sewer networks are likely to be antiquated and capacity could be exceeded; Anglian Water need to be assured the systems can cope with this development. [*See Paragraphs 119-121 (drainage)*].
  - Traffic to the site will increase as a result of the development but there has been no consideration given to the effects brought about by changes to the local highway network, especially closing Little Bethel Street, creating a new Chapelfield Road/Grapes Hill junction, eventual closure of Exchange Street, or the air and noise pollution impacts of the development. Having no parking on site will not meet minimum policy standards and there may be ad hoc parking or loading. Loading and servicing is not clearly shown in plans and could be a problem. [*See Paragraphs 87-110 (traffic)*].
  - Public transport access is inadequate as evening services are too infrequent, so the Travel Plan will not be effective. [*See Paragraphs 107-110 (travel plans)*].
15. Old Barley Market residents also question the way that the application has been handled, and specifically the iterative succession of plans and documents submitted and available to view either in person or on the Council's public access system. This is said to have prevented effective and meaningful public consultation

particularly for the layperson and means comments must be made on a 'moving target'.

16. The proposals were brought together in a short space of time and the applicant has engaged with the planning office at an early opportunity. As they took time to validate there were some elements of the design that changed whilst information was being assimilated, and these designs were not reflected in some supporting documents as they 'lagged' slightly. The planning authority tries to ensure the 'evolution' of a project since submission is available to view on the website, but does not have the means to identify superseded plans and documents once they are on the website; there are however clear markings given to all the revised plans and documents and the authority tries to ensure that revised information is available 'in one go' rather than being piecemeal additions. It is important to make the distinction between 'submission' and 'validation' too: Initial public consultation took place only when all information was available, post-validation (and marked revised as appropriate); the secondary consultation has been underway only once a full set of revised and additional information was in place (and dated appropriately) - this will last for at least the full 21-day period required by regulation, there are no practicable reasons for the consultation process to have been found wanting.

<b>Issues Raised</b>	<b>Response</b>
<p>Norfolk Constabulary – as neighbours on Bethel Street.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The adjoining land to the east of the Fire Station also serves the Police yard and should remain clear and accessible during construction and post-completion of development.</li> </ul>	<p>No works are proposed here other than landscaping. This is not public highway and matters of land ownership and legal access are not planning considerations, provided access is possible. The applicant proposes construction vehicles to use the courtyard or public highway.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Young people may congregate around the vehicle ramp leading down to the police yard and be endangered by police vehicles making a rapid exit.</li> <li>• Pick-up or drop-off cars could block this ramp/road and prevent police egress to Bethel Street.</li> </ul>	<p>This is not really something planning can control effectively. The instances will be few in number and students should be old enough to appreciate the need to avoid congregation there, particularly given the landscaping and facilities in front of the building.</p> <p>The road has 'double-yellow' lines in place already, but further highways signage and road markings can be used and secured by Section 106 to provide driver information.</p>
<p>The Salvation Army as neighbours currently access the rear of the St Giles Citadel via Old Barley Market and its access road to the west; they seek assurance that access will not be compromised.</p>	<p>This western access route is not public highway; matters of land ownership and legal access are not planning considerations, provided access is possible. The scheme proposes creating a new path along this route, to access the proposed cycle / refuse store and Old Barley Market beyond, which should improve pedestrian and cyclist safety and manoeuvrability.</p> <p>See paragraphs 93-96.</p>
<p>The design changes would adversely</p>	<p>See paragraphs 49-51 (principle) and 58-</p>

<p>affect the Grade II listed building status and be a detrimental impact, leading to further proposals to compromise heritage in the city.</p>	<p>86 (design).  All other proposals for listed building alterations would be subject to applications and considered on their own merit.</p>
<p>It is not realistic to expect such a large catchment to be served by public transport and car-based pick-ups and drop-offs will still occur, causing logistical problems, pedestrian danger and congestion, especially affecting police accessibility.</p>	<p>See paragraphs 87-110 (transportation).</p>
<p>The Free School Sixth Form will have negative impacts for the area's existing schools and education strategy for the city.</p>	<p>This has very limited planning relevance – see paragraphs 35-37 (principle).</p>
<p>There will be a negative impact on the sustainability of existing educational provision in both Norwich and the wider region, which would adversely affect local communities and potentially reduce choice in education provision.</p> <p>The existing schools are said to have budgetary limitations which constrain their ability to provide A-level sector services, and rely on attracting students to access funding streams to remain viable. The Free School will likely remove students from such a wide catchment that it will affect a number of existing schools and so threaten the survival of existing sixth forms.</p>	<p>The principle of providing a range of educational establishments and new schools is strongly supported by national policy, but at the same time must support local communities. See paragraphs 29-37 (principle).</p> <p>Financial arrangements for schools funding are not planning considerations and the national Government has promoted such additional schooling in the knowledge of funding consequences.</p>
<p>Challenge the rationale of the Schools' Chair of Governors that the Free School is necessary because "it will raise the game of all the schools in Norfolk who are, frankly, way off the pace at the moment".</p>	<p>The quality of existing or proposed schooling provision, or the possibility of improved standards through competition, is not a material planning consideration although it is part of the background to the Government's Ministerial Statement on Planning For Schools (August 2011). See paragraphs 29-37 (principle).</p>
<p>Energy consumption in converting the building and creating the school is unnecessary and makes existing school energy use less efficient if schools serve fewer people as there is an over-supply of existing school places / capacity.</p>	<p>Policies require all developments, once acceptable in principle, to provide energy efficiency and a proportion of energy through renewable sources; there is no policy basis to debate the need for energy use in principle. See paragraphs 115-117 (energy).</p>
<p>The Transport Statement is flawed; travel mode survey results are taken from a small survey of prospective</p>	<p>The school's central location, combined with the age of students and the wide catchment will favour public transport,</p>

students who were given a financial incentive to take part.	notwithstanding the difficulties of obtaining accurate survey data for a new concept of development in the city. See paragraphs 87-110 (transport).
The school may become fee-paying in the future, and is directed by business-people, so is not in the public interest.	This is not a planning consideration.

## Consultation Responses

17. **English Heritage** – No objection to the development in principle, and support the use for the building although it does involve negative elements associated with the extensions. Given the Fire Station’s Grade II listed status, are content to support the views of the Local Planning Authority and provide guidance on the impact of the development on the setting of the conservation area and some internal demolition.
18. The two extensions are the most significant elements to the conversion. The glazed area on the western block will not have a powerful presence in views from surrounding streets but will be seen from the eastern footpath, and masks the courtyard elevation somewhat. The stair and lift core tower is a large and significant addition forming a backdrop to the Hose Tower and needs further consideration to achieve the best result for both the listed building and the appearance of the surrounding area. Both features will have a negative impact on the building’s appearance but the application appears to need them for the circulation space they provide to the building’s principle function. On balance there is no objection to these features in heritage conservation terms, but matters of detailed design such as the material of the cladding on the tower will need further careful consideration. A range of concerns have also been raised around a number of elements of detail, including materials, retention of historic features, and mechanisms for retaining the interior layout of a part of the accommodation block and tender halls, most of which can be addressed by conditions or minor revisions to plans. Further updates will be provided to committee.
19. **Norwich Society** – Support the change of use and protection of the listed building, but are unhappy with the signage for the front elevation being located atop the stone cornice, believing the font style and location are unsuitable. They note the street landscaping is weak and the street trees proposed will detract from the strength of the front elevation.
20. **Environment Agency** – no objections providing that conditions are included on any permission, relating to the following: further contamination investigations, monitoring, contingency action and precautions to be taken given the high environmental sensitivity of controlled waters; further liaison with Anglian Water.
21. The EA also recommend the scheme includes a reduction in the use of resources (see below), and promote biodiversity (see below) and be designed to minimise energy demand and have decentralised and renewable energy technologies (as appropriate) incorporated (see below). Whilst they also recommend some pre-assessment under the appropriate Code/BREEAM standard should be submitted with the application, there are no requirements for this to be provided, nor planning policy criteria assessments against BREEAM or Code for Sustainable Homes criteria standards.
22. **Transport Planner** – Supports the proposals, believing this to be an appropriate

site for the use, and one of the most sustainable locations for schools as the city centre has a significant, extensive and high density pedestrian commuter catchment. The development is consistent with parking policies, will involve mainly independent travel and attract high levels of walking and the proposed movements to the site seem a reasonable forecast. Cycle parking at present seems appropriate but allowance should be made for expansion, and costs for public cycle parking, highways works to loading areas and signage, and travel plan monitoring are necessary. The development must provide an improvement to the Bethel Street public realm and reinstatement of the pavement in lieu of transport contributions.

23. **Environmental Health Officer** – Initially there were no details of noise from plant and machinery, flues or the referred-to cooling system. Although details have since been provided and are considered acceptable in principle, the precise form of plant and machinery are still unconfirmed, so conditions are suggested which require installation of such equipment to be undertaken only with assessment of the harm to local amenity taken into account, and should be designed to meet the noise levels detailed in noise impact assessment ADT 1896/CJM 13 March 2013. The general noise from the activity taking place will not be significant enough to adversely affect adjoining residential properties.
24. **Fire officer** – no objection if the scheme is built to current Building Regulations standards.
25. **Archaeology Unit** – no objection to the works.
26. **Anglian Water** – have no comments to make on the proposals; presumably foul sewage and surface water demands can be accommodated in the existing network.
27. **Travel Plan Officer** - The Travel Plan is not considered adequate, too many details and features are missing and the proposed cycle storage is too low. Monitoring will also be needed through planning obligations.
28. **Norfolk Police (Architectural Liaison)** – The comments received are supportive in principle. There is insufficient description of how the scheme improves security and crime prevention; access control measures should be provided, as should secure glazing if the listed building design constraints allow, and an intruder alarm system which allows partial isolation of the building such as during evenings. The police also request future section 106 contributions towards additional police presence to deal with the future impact.

## **ASSESSMENT OF PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

### **Relevant Planning Policies**

#### **National Planning Policy Framework:**

Paragraph 14 – Presumption in favour of sustainable development

Paragraphs 203-206 – Planning conditions and obligations

Section 1 – Building a strong, competitive economy

Section 2 – Ensuring the vitality of town centres

Section 4 – Promoting sustainable transport

Section 7 – Requiring good design

Section 8 – Promoting healthy communities

Section 10 – Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change

Section 11 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment  
Section 12 - Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

### **Relevant policies of the adopted Joint Core Strategy for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk 2011**

Policy 2 – Promoting good design  
Policy 3 – Energy and water  
Policy 5 – The economy  
Policy 6 – Access and transportation  
Policy 7 – Supporting communities  
Policy 11 – Norwich City Centre  
Policy 19 – The hierarchy of centres  
Policy 20 – Implementation

### **Relevant saved policies of the adopted City of Norwich Replacement Local Plan 2004**

NE4 – Street trees to be provided by developers  
NE9 - Comprehensive landscaping scheme and tree planting  
HBE3 – Archaeology assessment in Area of Main Archaeological Interest  
HBE8 - Development in Conservation Areas  
HBE9 – Development affecting Listed Buildings  
HBE12 - High quality of design in new developments  
HBE13 – Protection of major views and height of buildings  
EP1 - Contaminated land  
EP10 – Noise protection between different uses  
EP16 - Water conservation and sustainable drainage systems  
EP17 –Protection of watercourses from pollution from stored material, roads & car park  
EP18 - High standard of energy efficiency in new developments  
EP22 - High standard of amenity for residential occupiers  
EMP19 – Development of education and training establishments  
TRA3 – Modal shift measures in support of NATS  
TRA5 - Approach to design for vehicle movement and special needs  
TRA6 - Parking standards - maxima  
TRA7 - Cycle parking standards  
TRA8 - Servicing provision  
TRA10 – Contribution by developers for works required for access to the site  
TRA11 – Contributions for transport improvements in the wider area  
TRA12 – Travel Plans for employers and organisations in the city  
TRA18 - Major road network  
TRA26 - Design and materials in streetscape  
TVA8 - Heritage interpretation  
AEC1 – City Centre Leisure Area: Major art and entertainment facilities – location and sequential test  
TRA14 - Enhancement of the pedestrian environment and safe pedestrian routes  
TRA24 – City Centre Strategy  
TRA26 - Design and materials in the streetscape  
CC3 – Cultural and Civic Area – appropriate uses

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

Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (Adopted December 2006)  
Trees and Development (Adopted September 2007)  
Transport Contributions (January 2006)  
Heritage Interpretation (Adopted December 2006)  
City Centre Conservation Area Appraisal (September 2007)  
Statement of Community Involvement (March 2010)

### **Other Material Considerations**

Written Ministerial Statement: Planning for Growth, March 2011.

Written Ministerial Statement: Planning for Schools Development, August 2011.

The Localism Act 2011 – s143 Local Finance Considerations

Emerging policies of the forthcoming new Local Plan (submission document for examination, April 2013):

***Site Allocations Development Plan Document – Pre-submission policies (April 2013).***

**CC27:** Land to rear of City Hall

**CC28:** Fire Station, Bethel Street

***Development Management Policies Development Plan Document – Pre-submission policies (April 2013).***

**DM1** Achieving and delivering sustainable development

**DM2** Ensuring satisfactory living and working conditions

**DM6** Protecting and enhancing the natural environment

**DM7** Trees and development

**DM9** Safeguarding Norwich's heritage

**DM11** Protecting against environmental hazards

**DM22** Planning for and safeguarding community facilities

**DM28** Encouraging sustainable travel

**DM29** Managing car parking demand in the city centre

\* **DM30** Access and highway safety

**DM31** Car parking and servicing

\* This DM30 policy is currently subject to objections or issues being raised at pre-submission stage and so only minimal weight has been applied in its content. However, the main objective of ensuring safe passage around and within a development and prioritising pedestrian and cycle passage remains in place through Local Plan policies TRA3 and TRA5.

**Procedural Matters Relating to the Development Plan and the NPPF**

The Joint Core Strategy and Replacement Local Plan (RLP) have been adopted since the introduction of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act in 2004. With regard to paragraphs 211 and 215-216 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), both sets of policies have been subjected to a test of compliance with the NPPF. The 2011 JCS policies are considered compliant, but some of the 2004 RLP policies are considered to be only partially compliant with the NPPF, and as such those particular policies are given lesser weight in the assessment of this application. The Council has also reached submission stage of the emerging new Local Plan policies, and considers most of these to be wholly consistent with the NPPF. Where discrepancies or inconsistent policies relate to this application they are identified and discussed within the report; varying degrees of weight are apportioned as appropriate.

## **Principle of Development**

### **Policy Considerations – planning for new schools**

29. Locally, Joint Core Strategy policy 5 seeks to support further education and access to it, and advocates links between education provision and business concentrations including co-location where appropriate (i.e. sustainable). Policy 7 sets out the intention to provide sufficient, appropriate and accessible education opportunities. Policy 11 concerns the vision for Norwich city centre, and anticipates greater education presence as a means to reinforce the vibrancy and use of the city centre.

30. The City of Norwich Replacement Local Plan 2004 encourages development of further education in more accessible locations and the inner city in particular. Policy EMP19 is orientated towards the City College and University expansion but the principle remains; encouraging provision of some of their future growth needs

as part of the regeneration of the inner areas of the City and enable beneficial partnerships with other bodies. It would also conform to the policies for sustainable development, as students and many staff would find an expansion site outside the City to be less accessible. Although the thrust of the principle behind the policy is appropriate to apply in this instance, policy EMP19 is more directly relevant to developments on the existing College and University campuses, so it is considered less appropriate to attach weight to this policy, and instead consider the development against emerging, more contemporary, policies, both locally and nationally.

31. The NPPF (March 2011) (section 8: paragraphs 70 and 72) does require planning to build sustainable communities and (i) plan positively for provision of community facilities and local services, to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments; (ii) guard against the loss of valued facilities and services to ensure communities can meet their day-to-day needs; and (iii) ensure an integrated approach is taken to locating housing and community facilities and services. This is mirrored by Joint Core Strategy policy 7.
32. The Government (NPPF para 72) attaches great importance to ensuring that a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities, and stresses that local planning authorities should be positive towards development that will widen choice in education, and give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools.
33. Whilst the NPPF does not specifically refer to schools as being a community facility, it is not unreasonable to include them as such, especially given the NPPF's position in relation to new schools being able to serve communities. However, the intention of a sustainable community is to provide immediate needs in the local area; arguably the 16-19 year education sector is not a 'day-to-day need' as students can be much more discerning in their choice of education location (if indeed they choose to follow further education), and are much more mobile in any case. Whilst residential developments are much more sustainable if they have a further education provider to hand, it is not an essential characteristic of creating sustainable communities or new developments. On a wider scale, new residential developments within the catchment of existing schools/colleges are required to fund proportional local education provision, so new residential developments should retain access to higher education in relatively close proximity, and new housing is generally directed towards areas with good access to schools. Although the proposed school in this application does not serve a specifically-local residential population, it is not considered necessary for it to do so. Therefore, to be considered sustainable development it must be located appropriately and accessibly, as considered further below.
34. The support for providing additional state-funded school provision in particular is reiterated in the Government's August 2011 Policy Statement 'Planning for schools development'. Free schools come under the Government's definition of 'state-funded' schools, in as much as they at least start out as being funded by the state (albeit nationally, rather than locally); the aim being to allow more schools to open or existing schools to expand and adapt, to allow more provision and diversity in the state-funded school sector to meet demographic need and provide increased choice and, through competition, higher standards. It is the Government's view that the creation and development of state-funded schools is strongly in the national interest and planning decision makers should support that objective in a manner

consistent with their statutory obligations. The Statement makes clear that there should be a presumption in favour of the development of state-funded schools and local planning authorities should recognise the importance of enabling such development.

### **Policy Considerations – impact on existing schools**

35. Public concerns have been raised about the proposal leading to an unsustainable distribution of education facilities in the city and the wider region, and the proposal's consequent impact on existing school provision and related communities. It is important to note that the ethos and style or the qualitative issues of 'elitist' or 'mixed-ability' schooling within existing or proposed education provision is not a material planning consideration. It is useful context to note however that there does appear to be an existing over-supply of spaces in the 16-19 yrs sector compared to available students, including for A-level standard maths and science courses as proposed in this scheme (based on County Council school capacity assessments provided for large residential development planning applications).
36. It is not possible for planning to dictate the range of courses available at the school, nor the type of school operation, but it should assess its ability to serve sustainable communities and consider the consequences of its impact on existing schools. Public concerns raise valid spatial planning considerations that if schools close it will reduce access to educational choice in the region to be detrimental to creating sustainable communities where schools contribute to a range of services in an area, and will remove some of the existing support to other businesses. Financial arrangements for schools funding are not planning considerations and the national Government has promoted such additional schooling in the knowledge of funding consequences on other providers and its impact on communities.
37. The consequences of students commuting from within catchments of existing sixth forms do seem to be financially-linked and funding-based but there are no planning grounds to address these issues.

### **Policy Considerations – Site-specific policy**

38. **Existing 2004 Local Plan policy:** The former fire station building is currently a part of the Civic Quarter of the city centre, defined by policy CC3 and characterised by buildings of a grand scale with civic functions serving the whole City. The existing Local Plan vision is that it will develop its function as the civic and cultural heart of the City, provide attractive spaces around the primary buildings in the area to enhance their grand scale and enable movement around and between, and improve pedestrian access in particular. The policy promotes development of further leisure and cultural facilities and a hotel in this area. Uses should relate well to the existing major facilities in the area and provide for pedestrian movement between them. Whilst the proposed use is not specifically promoted by existing Local Plan policy, it is compatible in the broad sense. It is worth noting that neither the previous residential use nor future allocated policy would be consistent, and in any case the future policies propose to discontinue these Local Plan city centre designations.
39. **Emerging new 2013 local planning policy:** As well as generic policies regarding compatibility with neighbouring uses, promoting good design and using appropriate transport measures (which generally repeat the objectives of existing adopted Local Plan policy) the emerging local plan does include both a city-wide policy for new schools development, and a site-specific policy for the Fire Station's future use.

40. **City-wide policy DM22** – Although only recently submitted / approved for submission, the emerging Development Management Policies development plan document considers schools and other educational development within proposed policy DM22, below:

*Proposals for new or replacement schools and other educational facilities, extensions to existing schools and changes of use for school or other educational and training purposes will be accepted and permitted where:*

- a) they would not undermine the objectives for sustainable development set out in [emerging] policy DM1, in particular by increasing the need to travel by private car.*
- b) they would not give rise to significant impacts on the environment, highway safety or traffic arising from locational constraints or the particular configuration of the site or premises which could not be overcome by the imposition of conditions.*
- c) appropriate and adequate provision can be made for the residential accommodation needs of students (where required).*

*Particular support will be given to proposals which provide for the shared use of schools facilities by the wider community. The local community must be consulted to ensure that new and enhanced community facilities of all types best meet their needs and aspirations.*

41. It has been considered appropriate to offer 'significant weight' to this policy, despite its unadopted status, and in general the policy above is largely satisfied by the free school proposal. Assuming that travel demand is relatively low, as discussed further in the report below, the scheme would be for the most part 'sustainable', by improving education, being energy efficient, improving health and wellbeing and promoting mixed communities and cultural interaction, although compromise may be necessary in the aims of protecting the physical heritage asset (see also below).

42. **Site-specific policy CC28** - Based largely on the fact when it was first proposed that there was a known development opportunity and a valid planning permission at the site, the new local plan policy anticipates residential development and mixed commercial uses on the ground floor compatible with the city centre location.

43. Proposed policy CC28 as submitted / prepared for submission believes the fire station should be redeveloped for residential use providing at least 15 dwellings with no on-site parking. Although being car-free, providing landscaping and street reinstatement and providing a form of community use, the Free School proposal will still be entirely contrary to this new policy. Fairly substantial weight should be given to this emerging policy, albeit not the full weight as would be afforded an adopted Local Plan.

44. However, the proposed emerging allocations policies do not make any provision for allocating new school sites in the city centre. There are references made to the opportunity to provide educational use at Norfolk House (emerging policy CC25) but this was made on the basis of there being an extant permission for expanding City College further education there (12/01448/U, approved September 2012, now being implemented).

45. Further, school sites ought to be able to provide the on-site outdoor recreation space appropriate to their education characteristics and pupil requirements. The scheme makes a good use of the limited area available in the courtyard, but the space is limited. As such, the site is not considered appropriate for use by younger students because it is so constrained in outdoor space and this adds to the grounds for restricting the use through conditions to ensure the building serves older pupil provision only.

#### **Other Material Considerations – relationship to adjoining sites**

46. Old Barley Market residents have been concerned about the relationship to the former Bethel Hospital site, which is behind the hospital's tall brick wall against the back of the south side of the Bethel Street footpath. This is not a specifically allocated for further redevelopment in the emerging local plan, but does have some extant planning permissions at the site for conversion to residential uses, such as 4/2002/0349/F (a variation of 4/1998/0038/F), to provide seven dwellings in total. The hospital is also statutorily-listed and believed to be rather constrained in size and layout which might make further conversions difficult, but ultimately any different future uses, be it school, hotel, residential, offices, industry etc would all have to be assessed on own merits and shown to work in close proximity to the free school if permitted.

47. The emerging local plan also promotes redevelopment of the land to the rear of City Hall currently used as a car park and compound for the police, and also within the city centre civic quarter – see emerging policy CC27. The policy recognises the very difficult development constraints at the site, but does anticipate a 20-dwelling residential development in a mixed-use development also including office, leisure and retail. One of the design requirements here is the need to greatly improve the access route between St Giles and Bethel Street along the east side of the fire station.

48. The fire station scheme as proposed will not cause a negative impact on this new planning policy allocation, subject to appropriate designs being created at the car park site. The fire station already casts mid-winter afternoon and mid-summer evening shadows over the site and the new tower extension will not exacerbate this particularly, given the location behind the hose tower and at the same height as the west block. The main challenge will be to balance the movement of pedestrians, students and users of the new development, which should be improved by the expected north-south pedestrian route.

#### **Planning policy summary**

49. To summarise the policy position, the development is not entirely consistent with the location-specific existing policy in the Replacement Local Plan (2004), and contrary to the emerging site-specific local planning policies, although it will not unduly affect development at neighbouring sites. However, the Norwich Policy Area-based policies of the Joint Core Strategy do endorse the principle of new schools development in appropriate locations, and consider schools to be appropriate uses for the city centre.

50. Whilst there are strong arguments to suggest the nature of the school may have an impact on existing local education providers and local communities, it is considered that further education provision is less of an 'anchor' to creating sustainable communities than is the case with younger-age schools. Further, the ability for

planning to influence the impact on existing providers is minimal given student mobility and funding arrangements. Further, the strong support offered nationally to new schools through the NPPF and ministerial statements is a very significant consideration which greatly increases the 'weight' to be given to this particular proposal.

51. As such, despite compromising the forthcoming location-specific planning policy, the principle of the use in this location is considered on balance to be appropriate, and the determining factors must be whether the site is sufficiently accessible to be sustainable and whether the listed building can accommodate the use appropriately.

## **Impact on Living Conditions**

### **Noise and Disturbance**

52. Details have been provided showing indicative locations and appearance of flues, and an extract fan is understood to possibly be needed on the flat roof section adjoining the east-facing canopy infill. The details provided are considered acceptable in principle, although the precise form of plant and machinery are still unconfirmed, so conditions are suggested which require installation of such equipment to be undertaken only with assessment of the harm to local amenity taken into account, and should be designed to meet the noise levels detailed in noise impact assessment ADT 1896/CJM 13 March 2013, which is based on some generic models of equipment used in similar instances.
53. Overall, the general noise from the activity taking place will not be significant enough to adversely affect adjoining residential properties. Whilst the precise location of the flues, chimneys and extract ducts etc are as yet impossible to establish (until such time as the listed building has been appropriately surveyed and room specifications finalised), the revised plans do show a 'worst case scenario' and it is considered that the impacts are able to be accommodated by conditions.

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

54. There will be no impact from the development. The extensions are circulation space only and will not be used for lingering, and the scheme is far enough away from neighbours. There are windows in the new tower but these face east and views of the glazed areas are hidden by the hose tower, whilst any views out from here are only oblique.

### **Overshadowing**

55. The tower is shown to reach the eaves height of the western accommodation block, some 15.5m above Old Barley Market. Given the block nature of the tower, it could have been read as an extension of the western range had the building been more visible from the west, which is rarely possible along Bethel Street. The application has provided a shadow analysis considering impacts at mid-winter and mid-summer, and assessment is given to the south-facing velux windows of adjoining houses and front elevations and courtyard of Old Barley Market.
56. In mid-winter shadow broadens at mid-afternoon to fall across front elevations 2-3 Old Barley Market, and a rooflight. Mid-day shadow extends further north but affects only non-residential buildings. At mid-summer the direct south-north orientation and comparatively low height means the tower shadows are short or fall eastwards, and would have little overspill onto windows. The passageway will not

be affected to any great degree any more than is presently the case, given the narrow width and tall neighbouring buildings. On balance, although there is some increased overshadowing to the houses, the resultant impacts of the tower are not especially detrimental to existing neighbours and are not particularly in excess of those already created by the accommodation block.

### **Overbearing Nature of Development**

57. The design of the tower's cladding will be carefully controlled to ensure it is appropriate to the listed building setting and the appearance in the conservation area's skyline, which must be the priority rather than creating a 'softer' appearance or providing more activity in the elevation treatment. This may mean the material has to be 'flat' or matt and could become dark in appearance, which might feel overbearing to people underneath the tower, whether they are in the Old Barley Market courtyard or access route, or even in the school courtyard or glazed areas. This is considered a small compromise to make in order to find a successful solution to the wider design issue.

### **Design**

58. The Grade II Listed Building is an important example of 1930s civic architecture within a group including City Hall and has significant value as evidence of firefighting practice and city life during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The listed building description includes the following reasons for it being listed in 2008: it is substantially intact with a remarkable survival of fixtures and fittings; it has architectural quality of design, portraying gravitas and authority combined with successful functionality, and it forms a thoughtful and well-balanced composition; it has group value with the City Hall and Police station and is a key building in the civic heart of Norwich.

59. The two extensions are the most significant elements to the conversion and have the potential to disrupt the composition of the design rhythm, and balance of the Weights and Measures building, and compete with the tower and its relationship to the city hall clock tower. During the pre-application process the applicant has explored a number of ways to accommodate the lift tower and use different arrangements of the glazed extension on the accommodation block.

60. The lift core and stairs would ideally be positioned within the inner corner between tender hall and west block, but doing so would not provide the requisite escape distances or internal level access for the school. An extension directly on the side of the accommodation block would be more detrimental to the outward appearance of that wing and present problems with the restrictive covenant, whilst positioning such an extension on the inner side would mask that elevation too much from the courtyard. The tower has been designed to its minimal space requirement and with no façade activity to reduce its impact, and being built from the existing garage means it stands apart and separate, and disrupts less of the original building fabric.

61. Internally the fire station contains many original features and most of these will be retained in the proposed development. In order to ensure that this is the case a condition will be added to ensure that even minor architectural details, such as door handles and door signage, are preserved – as in this particular instance they are integral to the significance of the building.

62. The accommodation block's glazed extension was originally much deeper than proposed now, originally building-in space for teaching / study areas within the new construction which proved popular for the facilities it provided but problematic for the manner with which it would hide the façade much more and be somewhat taller. The current approach, subject to conditions to ensure optimal 'light' construction materials, means the façade remains as visible as possible, still looks of a high quality of design, and ensures the building functions as necessary.

### **Layout, Form, Scale and Height**

63. The fire station is currently arranged in a courtyard form, providing tall buildings to the south, fronting Bethel Street, and west, with lower form on the north side of the courtyard. The east provides vehicle access into the courtyard.

### **The Southern Block**

64. Fronting Bethel Street, the tender hall building has vehicle and appliance storage with tiled wall surrounds and original doors at ground floor, and open plan recreation room at first floor, with crew accommodation above, with winding staircases and pole access. The most significant internal areas of the building are the ground and first floors of the southern block / tender house and these areas have been carefully proposed so that the necessary alterations are relatively minimal and should not affect the impression of the significance of the existing open-plan spaces. Significant features in these areas (such as the lockers, flooring, door furniture, wall panelling and recreation room clocks and billiard board scorers at first floor level) will all be retained in situ by condition. Whilst there is some original furniture in the upper floor accommodation these are not considered unique and the existing dormitory floorplan is rather restrictive and not particularly special.

65. The open plan nature of the south block is retained with internal changes making the most of the interior layout. A classroom and reception area utilise existing ground floor storage, with the open-plan nature being retained despite installing a retractable wall to the new multi-use hall (with final details by condition). The Bethel Street frontage garage doors will all be retained and given a stained dark timber finish, and the nature of new glazing agreed by condition. A new glazed screen and sliding doors are proposed inside the new visitor entrance and this be acceptable subject to precise details of methods and position of fixings. A refectory / informal seating area is proposed in the courtyard underneath the canopy, within a glazed infill extension; this is a relatively lightweight infilling of an existing and original structure and is considered acceptable. With careful designs the glazed nature of this area will help it interact with both the tender hall and the courtyard on both sides and create a multi-use space, and prevent the loss of such a large area of the courtyard space being too keenly felt when recreation space is needed. A new door to the east elevation is provided, to be sympathetic to the Weights and Measures main office entrance.

66. At first floor the recreation room is retained as a library, with reprographics, classrooms and ICT labs either side. By using low level screens at the main entrance the full interior, wood panelling and storage lockers all remain available to view and use. The school had been concerned that the existing folding screen could be of poor noise-reduction quality for use as a divider between library and classroom, but it has important character value and needs to be retained; a solution is proposed for the doors to be retained and set in the closed position, with an infill wall provided behind to provide acoustic performance and be slightly inset to

maintain the appearance of the screen arch – details can be confirmed by condition. Cycle shower facilities are newly-provided at first floor level in the eastern area; a complicated and convoluted arrangement but necessary given the restrictions of the site.

67. Upper floors are converted to laboratories and prep rooms and plant areas, which necessitates the loss of the dormitory layout. This is acceptable, subject to conditions for final agreement of flues, cooling fans, extraction gear and chimneys affecting the roofline, and details being agreed for the replacement joinery and glazing in the two louvred dormer vents in the north elevation of the roof which will become windows.

### **The western block / accommodation building**

68. The accommodation block has access to both courtyard and the Old Barley Market access road. The block housed officers and their families in flats above the garages, with individual flats being arranged off each landing with an identical layout in each floor; most have original simple interior detailing and fireplaces with tiled surrounds and a couple of attractive and unusual bookcases / display cabinets. English Heritage advice is very strongly in favour of retaining the layout of local brigade fire station accommodation blocks, because they offer a unique insight into the function of fire services, stating: "...if major change is unavoidable, then the potential for one flat to be kept within a station as an illustration of the historic layout should be explored."

69. The proposals leave the exterior of the building unaffected on its western elevation facing the Old Barley Market road, but the eastern elevation to the courtyard is proposed to be entirely clad in the glazed extension to provide the circulation corridors and level access between the southern block and stair / lift core tower, with a ground floor lobby and door from the courtyard. The east elevation is currently cluttered with redundant fire stairs and is partially obscured by the canopy; whilst the glazing will not improve the visibility of the façade, it will remove the existing clutter and provide a streamlined finish and high quality of design. It should make minimal interruption to the view of the window arrangements, will not be so high as to exceed the eaves and disrupt the roofline or appear over-dominant and will not have a significant detrimental impact on the appearance overall.

70. Garages at ground floor currently have 'bay' layouts and include folding doors of character value; the proposal to convert into a small coffee bar with direct access to the atrium within the glazed extension keeps these doors and half of the bays, so ensures heritage connection in that regard. The new entrance lobby, atrium and a classroom have removed half the bay area directly in view of the east access, but this is considered acceptable on balance as interventions should be minimal and the existing timber doors will be retained, modified with glazing and fixed shut so will provide a solid, traditional appearance on entrance. The new cycle and refuse area can be accessed internally through the entrance lobby and lift, and a route via the glazed extension will ensure cyclists can reach the showers etc under cover if needs be.

71. The upper floors' existing interior layout completely precludes any use as classroom or laboratory space, which also have necessary associated bathrooms and circulation spaces. For the most part the application needs to remove all interior features (albeit some of the furniture is relocated to the office facilities in the northern block) as laboratories need the full depth of the building to gain minimum

floorspace. On the third floor, in the proposed science lab prep rooms the application retains a third of the existing accommodation layout as office and equipment stores, but English Heritage feels this is not sufficient. A compromise could be reached through conditions, to retain an element of the layout in the floor tiling or roof structure, or retaining some of the wall structure as nibs or downstands in the otherwise open-plan room, but at least some of the original walls and original fireplace here will be retained. Downstand features have been proposed to demarcate the original layout where it will be lost but they should be marked on the proposed plans. Further historic reference can be required by condition to allow the original proportions of this room to be read in relation to the chimney stack.

72. The glazed extension has been reduced in height by not providing a full-length external access corridor and associated head-room at the highest level (5<sup>th</sup> storey) and instead providing corridor routes inside the building at the expense of optimal interior classroom floorspace. This has successfully ensured the main form of the building is retained and the glazed extension is read as a lightweight facade rather than a structural addition. The set back of the building also means the it no longer projects in front of the northern range building so the symmetry of the northern block will not be lost. The minimal use of ramps around an atrium void keeps the interior of the glazing spacious, light and airy and acts as a natural cooling chimney to minimise the need for building-in noisy and bulky cooling plant and machinery and associated flues. The louvers of the roof will provide ventilation, shade and a modern appearance and finish to the vertical form.

### **The northern range and Weights and Measures building**

73. The northern block is only two storey's high and contains garages and fire service offices, and the unique fire practice hose tower rising to 6 storeys. The Weights and Measures Building at the eastern end was not part of the original fire station and the whole range has no interior value other than containing an original wrought iron staircase in the Weights and Measures Building.

74. The plans show this range will include the new lift core and stair tower rising from the western-most garage, with a maintenance access door from there included onto the flat roof. The new stair tower will be seen most clearly in the context of the hose tower from within the courtyard and from the City Hall site to the east. However the simple design of the stair tower, its plain elevations with the proposed silver cladding system and its position, should ensure the red brick hose tower remains a much more solid and dominant feature that juxtaposes with the more visually lightweight stair tower and is not dominated by it. It will be important that samples of the proposed cladding system are provided as well as information on the method and arrangement of any panels, as this will be key to its appearance and relationship to the hose tower.

75. Aside from photovoltaic panels being proposed on the flat roof (which will be subject to conditions to agree their final form), it will otherwise remain unaffected (the pre-application proposal to include a glazed corridor along the front of this building was deemed unnecessary and detrimental to its appearance and usability of the courtyard).

76. The wrought iron staircase in the Weights and Measures Building will be retained and unaltered as part of providing the general office facilities, which is beneficial and appropriate to the historic context as this is considered to be the only element of historic value in the Weights and Measures building. The new layout provides

ground floor classrooms with retained newly-glazed timber screens and doors retained or replicated, and the principal's office within the tower. First floor uses provide staff facilities and office space in the unaltered eastern part.

77. The hose tower, which in the previous scheme had been incorporated into a residential flat as a means to ensure its continued upkeep, does not appear to have anything other than an aesthetic function although a spiral staircase is proposed within to allow viewing. This non-use is acceptable because the school will be one ownership organisation, retaining responsibility for maintenance. Only one area has caused concern, in that the application is suggesting removing the existing important louvers from the top floor and replacing them with windows, to prevent bird roosting and increasing visibility. Whilst final treatments can be resolved by condition, the principle of their removal is not really considered appropriate unless an alternative design can be found as the proposed windows would not be characteristic, and further information is expected prior to the committee meeting.

### **Listed Building – Impact on setting and historic features**

78. The main areas of initial concern have since been addressed in revised plans:

- The Bethel Street doors are retained and naturally-stained;
- Billiard scorers remain in the recreation room (now library) rather than principal's office;
- Roof-top chimney stacks are not been removed, only some of the interior chimneys;
- Much-improved visibility of the first floor interior by using low-level screens to the reprographics room rather than permanent or full height glazing partition walls; and,
- Improved accessibility to the new lobby next to the lift;
- The position of the flues and extract grilles etc is only proposes as a 'worst-case design scenario', and may not be as proposed in the final form, which is reassuring.

79. The following matters have been requested to be resolved prior to the committee meeting and are not considered significant enough to require further public consultation:

- Details of air conditioning plant and machinery and the east range flat-roof appliance;
- Details of materials proposed in the east-facing wall of the canopy infill area;
- Clarity in plans regarding the position of new doors in lift tower and east-facing glazing;
- Revised proposals for the louvers in the hose tower - In order to establish whether or not this is acceptable, designs should be provided. Small-paned casement Crittal-type windows are most likely to be acceptable. At present louvres are still shown in some of the proposed elevations and the plans should offer more clarity;
- Downstand features to be shown on plans for level 3 of the accommodation block to demarcate the original layout;
- Plans and elevations need to show a door from the top of the glazed extension into the interior of the accommodation block;
- Modified notations on plans regarding the cladding to the new tower, to be less specific about the materials and cladding system proposed, so allowing further discussion;
- Indicative proposals for a landscaping solution to the eastern access path area.

80. Whilst the tower and the glazed extension are dramatic additions, their scale has been minimised and retains proportionality consistent with the remainder of the building although many details are to be resolved finally under conditions. This includes all glazing and new or replacement windows; in response to the police advice, the applicant can include security features if they wish, although the design will need to be complementary to the listed building features and enhance its heritage value. CCTV is proposed in plans, the details of which also need to be conditioned. Access control measures and intruder systems are not a planning factor so long as are compatible with the listed building.

81. **Heritage interpretation and recording** – Bethel Street is regarded as the ‘home’ of firefighting in Norwich and a massive connection to the civic cluster. It is necessary for the heritage to be recorded and presented to the public; many viewable features are retained in the conversion, not least the restored doors and signage (early pre-application proposals suggested covering the ‘Fire Station’ banding with the school name but this would be detrimental). A condition will allow creative interpretation of the building’s heritage and a means to ensure the history is recorded and publically viewable.

### **Conservation Area – Impact on setting and historic context**

82. The site is close to a number of listed buildings including the Police Station, City Hall, and Bethel Hospital (all grade II\*), the former ice rink, and 33 and 38 Bethel Street (all grade II). Its immediate surroundings contain many of Norwich’s main public buildings, including City Hall, the refurbished market place and the Forum, which are at the civic heart of Norwich. However, other than from the side of City Hall on St Giles Street and from immediately adjoining on Bethel Street, there are actually no views of the Fire Station, not from elsewhere on Bethel Street or from the ridge of Theatre Street, Chapelfield or Upper St Giles, or from the lower ground around Pottergate and St Benedicts. All views from the Castle / east / north-east are obscured by City Hall, and those from the west and south are hidden by fairly tall buildings sited tight and close to the street. The northern view from the top of Upper Goat Lane will reveal some of the stair/lift tower but surprising little, as most will be hidden behind Old Barley Market and its height will reach only the eaves of the accommodation block. Being smooth, matt and metallic will be of such a contrast the tower will likely just be ‘background’ in the skyline. As such, impact on the Conservation Area and views from within, and across, the conservation area skyline, will be minimal.

83. The glazed area on the western block will not have a powerful presence in views from surrounding streets but will be seen from the eastern footpath, and masks the elevation somewhat. The stair and lift core tower is a large and significant addition forming a backdrop to the Hose Tower. Whilst both features will have a negative impact on the building’s appearance when seen in the immediate vicinity, i.e. within the courtyard or Old Barley Market and its access road, the effect on the building’s wider outward appearance is actually rather minimal.

84. The school needs to include stairs for emergency access and circulation and a lift for providing level access because there are very different levels within the two blocks used for teaching purposes (south and western blocks). The access is necessary to facilitate the building’s principle function and bring the building into use; as the use as a school is appropriate and positive for the city centre, it is appropriate to explore means to facilitate its use if the resultant impacts can be

minimised and the predominant features of the listed building preserved.

85. The lift tower and circulation strategy has been positioned in the optimal position in relation to the listed building whilst still providing necessary function for the school and maximising the interior for optimal classroom floorspace. Although there are valid arguments for doubting the suitability of such a listed building for this use when such alterations need to be made to the premises, there has been great consideration given to the proposal. Taking a balanced view in heritage conservation terms, it is not considered necessary to object to the proposals' features because the designs have evolved so that works cause limited impact on the conservation area and significant efforts have been made in preserving the most significant elements of the interior. Matters of detailed design, such as the material of the cladding on the tower and providing a much-improved landscaped setting, will however need further careful consideration through use of stringent conditions.
86. The Norwich Society have raised concerns that the signage is inappropriate, which is a difficult issue to reconcile given the need to preserve the Fire Station signage. Ultimately this lettering and the proposed Totem sign on the frontage will be the subject of a separate advertisement consent and full planning permission, and listed building consent; it may be possible through for an alternative location to be found such as individual lettering pinned to the upper wall.

## **Transport and Access**

### **Transport Statement and Traffic Impacts**

87. In principle, this proposal is acceptable in transport terms. The City Centre offers the most sustainable location from a transport perspective, with a very high proportion of the population having the potential to access it without the need for a car. Local Highways Authority experience with other educational establishments in the City Centre is that, unlike their suburban counterparts, the traffic and congestion impact is very much lower. The City Centre has an extensive and high density pedestrian catchment and a substantial number of people from the inner suburbs routinely walk into the City Centre, and the whole of the urban area is within cycling distance and has access to frequent bus services to the City Centre. A school in this location is likely to have the least traffic impact of anywhere in Norfolk; a more suburban location would encourage and require a much higher level of car use than this site.
88. As there is currently no pupil base, the Transport Statement's approach taken to estimate the likely modal share of students seems reasonable. The Statement's estimate is likely to have over-estimated public transport use, but it is also likely to have under-estimated the number of walking trips. This is a school intended for an older age group, and consequently it is likely that the majority of pupils will travel independently, and the opportunity for them to drive is substantially curtailed by the parking strategy in the City Centre. The Transport Planner believes the modal share suggested here is consistent with other urban colleges of this type. Consequently, and given the very sustainable location, the anticipated traffic movements to the site seem a reasonable estimate. At this level the impact on the highway network would be insignificant. Planning conditions will be imposed to require the site to only be used for further education / older students, and be limited to 440 students in total, to ensure the traffic impacts are minimised.

89. Staff travel patterns have been forecast on travel to work data. As there is no parking, these will probably represent an over-estimate of the actual number who drive (or are driven) to work. It is also important to recognise that the previous use of the site did involve a fairly significant number of people working on the site, and consequently there would have been movements associated with that use. It is not possible to tell from the information submitted how many of the staff who might be dropped off would be given a lift by someone already making a journey to the City Centre, but there will be some, and not everyone will be delivered to the front door. Consequently that actual impact close to the building is unlikely to be that great, and overall the impact of traffic on the network will again be insignificant.
90. It is considered sufficient for local highway impacts to be managed by virtue of planning conditions restricting the use of the premises and number of students at the site, and for the Travel Plan to promote sustainable travel and require a commitment to responsible car-free school attendance where possible (discussed further under Travel Plan below).
91. Although there may be some increase in traffic into the city centre and, to a lesser extent, the site itself, the lasting impacts are thought to be minimal. Whilst the scheme has not modelled its operations against anticipated changes to the local highway network, (e.g. closing Little Bethel Street, creating a new Chapelfield Road/Grapes Hill junction, eventual closure of Exchange Street), the Transport Planner has considered these impacts and finds the scheme acceptable and in future there will be fewer opportunities to 'drop-off' or pick-up. The closure of Little Bethel Street means that traffic will egress either via Exchange Street as now, or via Cleveland Road (instead of Chapelfield North). The objective of those schemes is to further reduce the attraction and ease of travelling by car into the city centre, speeding up and making bus journeys more efficient, and improving the cycling environment, so the consequences are thought to be beneficial and car impacts further reduced in time.
92. Air and noise pollution may in fact increase as a result of short-term journeys made to the school, but the difference will be negligible as traffic volumes would be so low, and in time the inconvenience of driving close to the school will likely discourage car journeys and reduce impacts further.

### **Vehicular Access and Servicing**

93. Vehicle access to Old Barley Market can be improved by conditions requiring the use of security lighting on the fire station, required as a consequence of the cycle and refuse stores' addition and the need to maintain safe access. The applicant proposes to extend the footpath to the cycle store to further improve safety, but it is not necessary to make further specific changes to the Bethel Street egress as the tight conditions act as a speed control. It is within the owners' control to provide their own waiting restrictions or traffic controls on the Old Barley Market access road if deemed necessary.
94. Concerns have been raised about the cycle and refuse stores and collections impeding access for coach or minibus journeys into Old Barley Market and vehicles currently reverse along the access road. The cycle store 'turning area' is currently not available anyway, and whilst journeys long the access drive will be more frequent the impacts are not going to be any greater.
95. Servicing / loading will only be allowed from the front entrance on Bethel Street. A

planning condition will ensure signage or other means are put in place to prevent waiting / loading on the eastern side within the application 'red line', as part of works to improve the landscaping, public realm and streetscape around the eastern entrance.

96. Refuse and waste collection needs only be relatively minimal if frequency of collections are adequate. The school does not have proposals for anything more than a coffee canteen servery, and is not proposing on-site meals (which may not be successful anyway given the close proximity to city centre eateries). The stores provided are both along the Old Barley Market access road and the eastern access. Private management arrangements will need to cater for the regular collections, but are currently inappropriate, being only a weekly collection. It is suggested that whilst the transportation planners regard the storage arrangements as being acceptable, the collection must be improved through a servicing and refuse management plan to be agreed by conditions.

### **Car Parking**

97. There is no car parking provided with this proposal (and none is possible). This means that any parking demand will have to be accommodated in one of the many public car parks in the area (e.g. St Giles, Chapelfield, the Forum off Bethel Street or St Andrews). Tariffs in the City Centre are deliberately set to deter long-stay parking, with long-stay parking provision being provided at Park and Ride sites (those living within the urban area have access to bus services). It is, of course, possible that some staff or students will still drive to work, but this would currently cost approx £5 a day. As a general principle, it is the Councils policy that uses within the City Centre should provide only operational car parking, and that general parking demand should be provided by existing public provision. The development is thus consistent with the city of Norwich Replacement Local Plan parking policy and the proposal does not present an ongoing risk of congestion.
98. It is anticipated that a carefully-designed pavement reinstatement along Bethel Street will actually work to reduce the speed of traffic using Bethel Street, narrowing the road and minimising the instances of waiting / drop-off and pick-up drivers. It should also be borne in mind that the whole of Bethel Street benefits from parking permit restrictions and double-yellow lines and is only yards from the City Hall, which should give pause for thought to any drivers seeking to escape the attention of parking enforcement officers.

### **Cycling, Cycle Parking and site circulation**

99. The site is very constrained, and the Transport Planner sees little benefit in over-providing cycle parking. A 10% modal share for cycling is consistent with current levels of cycling in the City, so that would suggest that the proposed 50-60 cycle stands proposed would be adequate. This will certainly be the case in the first year, when the school is only half full. The Travel Plan should inform the level of provision of cycle parking on the site once the school is up and running. The Transport Planner believes that if cycling increases there is little opportunity to increase cycle parking on the site, and requires provision to be in place for all parties to least identify where additional cycle parking might be located, given that most of it would need to be covered and secure given the likely 'long-stay' nature of its use. The high density stacking systems suggested are appropriate in this instance, given this, and the space constraints.
100. Cycle store provision is proposed at the north-west corner adjacent to the Old

Barley Market complex and accessed along the western road. This store provides for 50 cycles in a two-tier system to ensure the most efficient use of space and room for refuse storage.

101. In principle, City Council Local Plan policy requires at least 10 cycle stands per classroom and two visitor stands by the entrance and in theory this would equate to 190 spaces given there are 19 classrooms and laboratories in total. However, the formulae have to be applied pragmatically; the standard was created when the classrooms were expected to hold 30+ students, but this scheme is constrained to 440 students, or 14 30+classrooms (140 spaces). Experience has shown though that a 10% cycle rate is appropriate, and the proposed provision is acceptable.
102. Within the March revised designs, the cycle store is proposed with much-improved access into the complex and a new pavement along the western road, so benefitting users and providing an internal through-route into the site from the store. This improves circulation, student safety and supports cycling as a means to access the school. Staff provision (5 stores) is carefully located in the courtyard by the staff offices; in general the scheme has been careful to ensure the maximum available landscaped space remains available in the courtyard for recreation. This is a key feature of the proposals and the desire to promote cycling beyond the existing provision must be balanced against the need to provide a high quality and useable courtyard environment.
103. The cycle store is shown in a site which is apparently subject to existing covenants. The covenant wording (at least in part) has been provided, and appears to prevent the erection of any buildings on that particular part of the site, and that the site be available for turning vehicles and not subject to stationary vehicles which are not being loaded. This is a private, civil, matter and not for the planning committee to adjudicate on. It is possible that the scheme may not being able to provide cycle storage in the location proposed, however various alternatives may be feasible.
104. It is proposed that conditions be flexibly applied to allow time for such arrangements to be made, but it should be noted that any inability to meet planning conditions will render the development liable to enforcement action or liable to needing to revise its proposals. Provision and availability of appropriate levels of cycle storage has been a consideration throughout, and it will be essential to the success of the scheme and it's Travel Plan. The scheme includes a number of rooms assigned to non-school functions and spaces, as previously alluded to, and it is considered entirely possible for replacement facilities, or additional cycle storage, to be provided in some of these ancillary spaces or be off-site if necessary. It is therefore recommended to use conditions/legal agreement to allow this.
105. Given the uncertainty of access to, and demand for, cycle storage, it is proposed to use conditions flexibly, with a time allowance built-in for permanent arrangements to be made. It is suggested that in the event of the proposed cycle storage not being possible immediately, that temporary cycle storage provision is provided for the first year's use at a pro-rata quantum based on first year occupancy, perhaps in the courtyard or a classroom; thereafter an increased capacity based on full occupancy shall be provided and in place within 12 months of first opening, in accordance with a scheme to be agreed with the LPA, either in the original proposed site or an alternative location within the complex.

106. The Transport Planner supports the in-principle use of some cycle parking on the forecourt (which is public highway) and increased levels of cycle parking on the other side of Bethel Street, if there is demand, but cautions that these facilities are not really appropriate for long-stay cycle storage, being better suited to visitor short stay use. However, unless the applicant can identify some additional space on site where further cycle stands could be made available if demand increases, this may be the only option available. As such, the potential to expand cycle storage would need to be included in the Section 106 Agreement as the school would have to pay for this additional provision; the most appropriate way forward would be for the school to agree to fund these if they prove necessary. It is suggested appropriate to secure a commitment to provide a further 60 spaces (30 stands) in three phases if that proved necessary (as determined by the Travel Plan results).

### **Travel Plan**

107. The Travel Plan is not considered adequate, too many details and features are missing and whilst the Travel Plan Officer believes the proposed cycle storage to be too low, the level is appropriate to existing travel patterns and can be expanded in future if travel habits suggest it necessary. Travel Plan monitoring will be needed through planning obligations.

108. It is not considered sufficiently developed to be considered a final version of the Travel Plan, so should be regarded only as an Interim Travel Plan. It is considered possible to use conditions to require the existing Outline Travel Plan to be amended and form an Interim Travel Plan updated to a standard useable for the first 12 months of partial school occupancy, and thereafter then be developed into a Full Travel Plan in preparation for full school occupancy, based on more accurate survey data and success of interim measures.

109. The most important element of the Travel Plan will be to prevent car parking and congestion from 'drop-off' or 'pick-up' car journeys attending the site. As this is a new school, there is an opportunity to influence behaviour from the outset. The Surrey Street Free School, albeit having a much different age group and 'usual' traffic characteristic, has successfully avoided such problems to date by requiring parents to buy-into a car-free school ethos and agree with the school not to drive directly to the site. Whilst the transport planner's assessment does not predict the schools car-journeys to become a significant problem, it is nevertheless considered essential to prevent such a problem taking hold in the first place, as became apparent during the pre-application presentations. The applicant has resisted such measures to date during pre-application and formal submission; nevertheless it is considered necessary and reasonable to include such requirements of the Interim and Full Travel Plans, and should also be fairly straight-forward to administer for the school. The applicant has been advised of this position again, as this will feature as a part of the Travel Plan condition, and an update on the situation should be available at the Committee.

110. Members may recall that the Surrey Street Free School permission included a financial contribution to the City Council to be spent on enforcing on-street traffic controls in the vicinity of the development. This is not considered necessary in this instance as the school will be conditioned to be used for older pupils only, so reducing the likelihood and intensity of car-journeys being made, and because the Surrey Street site was adjacent to the bus station and the consequences of a conflict in traffic was more significant. Furthermore, Bethel Street is more lightly trafficked and is much wider than Surrey St, so has more margin to accommodate

congestion if it does arise.

## **Environmental Issues**

### **Site Contamination and Remediation**

111. Although this brownfield site contains former fuel tanks and industrial appliances, there are no contamination-based concerns to suggest the scheme should not be acceptable in principle, and the proposed development of the site would not appear likely to pose a significant risk to controlled waters. However, the Environment Agency have said the desk-top study and site investigations report of 2009 was limited in its investigations; they recommend the in-situ underground fuel storage tanks, associated pipe-work, and interceptor all be removed to allow investigation and analysis beneath, because the controlled waters at the site are of high environmental sensitivity. They propose conditions for further site investigation, assessment, remediation as necessary, and verification, to ensure the protection of controlled waters. The Environment Agency are satisfied that there are generic remedial options available to deal with the risks to controlled waters posed by contamination at this site, although further details will be required in order to ensure that risks are appropriately addressed prior to development commencing.
112. In considering whether using such a condition is reasonable, regard has to be given to the extent of works involved on site as they may lead to contaminant release. A sole change of use proposal would not involve any works so the scheme would not have further impact; in this instance however there are some fairly significant construction works proposed to create foundations and footings for the extensions in the courtyard and garage, and the courtyard is to be re-landscaped, resurfaced and planted. This is extensive and the potential to disturb ground is evident; it also means there is an opportunity to undertake site investigations without undue inconvenience.
113. It is acknowledged, however, that the school does hope to open within months, albeit at lower capacity for the first year. It is proposed that these investigative works and remediation as necessary should be undertaken prior to completion of the landscaping scheme, which itself is only considered essential to be provided within 12 months of opening so that it is ready for the school to operate at full capacity. These are conditions.

### **Archaeology**

114. Despite being in the area of main archaeological interest, the Norfolk Archaeology service raise no objection to the works and need no conditions on any permission.

### **Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy**

115. A renewable energy strategy has looked at how best to provide renewable energy through systems which will not detract from the appearance and setting of the building and its features. They argue that biomass heating requires storage and alterations to the listed building and servicing demands for this building in this location, and necessitates large flues etc which may be problematic. This has not been adequately justified at this time and further investigative work is required by condition. Wind turbines would be ineffectual and air source heat pumps could look unsightly unless positioned behind a screen to the back of the site but the noise generated by such units could conflict with amenity of neighbouring residents. The

suggested use of photovoltaic panels will enable their concealment behind the parapet roof lines of the southern and northern block and be visible only to users of the school, so tying into the technology college ethos.

116. The usable roof space combined amounts to 188sq.m. The construction and visibility of the southern block roof prevents mounting on the south-facing sloping roofs on conservation grounds. An area of 500sq.m. would be necessary to gain 10% of the energy generation needed, so there will be some compromise, and only 4% of the building's energy demand is possible from renewable sources alone (not including energy for equipment requirements, which is difficult to ascertain at this stage). To mitigate this shortfall the applicant has proposed a significant upgrade of the heating system to make it more efficient, to provide 9% savings on heating and hot water energy demand, and upgrade the outdated lighting network, to make a 50% electricity saving. However this is not necessarily a like-for-like comparison and further work is needed in this regard.

117. Although there are works involved in improving the performance of the building's thermal envelope, the scheme still needs to make best efforts to provide the on-site energy generation, by exploring biomass systems and improved energy efficiency estimates for example, despite being constrained by the building's existing design, listed status and adjacency to neighbours.

### **Water Conservation**

118. In terms of overall efficiency, a reduction in the use of resources (including water, energy, waste and materials) should be evident. There are no specific measures in place to demonstrate optimal water efficiency as yet, so a condition will be used to promote use of efficient appliances.

### **Drainage**

119. The scheme is proposed to drain into both existing surface and foul sewer networks. Anglian Water have been consulted on the application and said they have no comments to make on the proposals; presumably foul sewage and surface water demands can be accommodated in the existing network.

120. The applicant nevertheless proposes to reduce surface water run-off by 20% to allow connection to Anglian Water's network. This is said to be likely to need sustainable drainage attenuation and flow control; no firm details have been provided to date, but a strategy will need to be agreed with Anglian Water outside of planning and the results linked to the site's landscaping proposals to ensure an appropriate design.

121. Any liquid or hazardous waste produced at the school would need to be controlled by non-planning means, most likely in consultation with the Environment Agency.

### **Plant, Lighting and CCTV**

122. All details will be conditioned to ensure appropriate design and minimal disturbance.

### **Trees and Landscaping**

#### **Street Tree planting and site landscaping**

123. Development will only be acceptable if it includes improvements to the public

realm and reinstating the Bethel Street footpath prior to new use commencing. The development should also take the opportunity to enhance biodiversity and habitat in the scheme; although opportunities are limited there are new tree plantings and landscaping proposed and this will be secured by landscaping conditions. Unfortunately there is insufficient detail and lack of clarity on the design of exterior spaces, though, such as surfacing around and within the courtyard of the building. Although concern regarding trees has been raised by the Norwich Society, if appropriately sited, the trees would be an asset to the street scene.

124. At the frontage to Bethel Street, using street trees aligned to the pillars of the building is sound, but the front of the building is south-facing and would be an attractive place for future students to use, yet the three proposed benches do little to make this a really useable and enjoyable space and the trees and benches are not integrated. There is little regard to the role this area could play for the school and the opportunity to promote more general public interaction with the building, and in fact the proposals would actually impede pedestrian access and fail to create a sense of arrival at the entrances.
125. Within the courtyard, the seating areas and trees have been proposed in a rather utilitarian and regimented manner, whereas the interior space could be much more beneficial if it were able to create a more informal relaxed space, with conversation and gathering areas created instead. More imagination should be afforded to the scheme, perhaps with bespoke seating or even raised sections creating wide seating steps, because at present the area appears to be little more than a through-route rather than being functional and useable. Far more could be achieved in terms of detailed design in this area to create a contemporary and visually attractive outside space.
126. Unfortunately, the perimeter areas are left in their present poor condition and given no attention to create improvements. This may be due to the uncertain ownership arrangement, but the circulation link between the courtyard and the front of the building is particularly poor as the pavement is impractically narrow for the new use and greater pedestrian frequency; it is considered necessary for access to and from the courtyard to be improved by creating a linkage between the setts at the front of the building and the interior courtyard. The numbers of students using this access route warrants a more considered approach, particularly as there could be conflict between vehicles and pedestrians and students, and as the existing pavement is so narrow and blocked by a road salt bin and downpipes etc. As the scheme's site plan includes this land and it is in City Council ownership, it is entirely feasible to deliver improvements, and is required also by the emerging policy for the adjoining site development, so such a requirement will be confirmed by planning condition.
127. To summarise, the proposals to redevelop the Bethel Street frontage have elements that can be supported in principle but the detail needs revising and the landscaping strategy approach needs to be expanded to look closer at the courtyard and eastern frontage. A landscaping condition will be exacting in its requirements for these elements.

## **Local Finance Considerations**

128. The proposal to bring the building back into positive use will help create

vibrancy in the city centre and encouragement to other developments and the number of students and staff will create spending on local facilities and city centre shops and services.

## **Planning Obligations**

129. There are no current policies to allow contributions to be sought for funding additional police resources arising from the development, but the impact is considered to be low.

## **Street Trees**

130. Although the trees are proposed to be included in the conditions for landscaping and restoration of the Bethel Street footpath, contributions for covering 25 years' tree maintenance are required for street as the trees will be in the public highway.

## **Transport Improvements**

131. Transport Contributions are calculated on the net increase in peak hour car movements to the site. We do not have that figure because not all the movements will be in the peak hour, some movements will already be on the network (i.e. someone already working in the City, giving their partner a lift) and we do not know how precisely many movements were associated with the previous use. Provided that the Travel Plan is conditioned, implemented and monitored, and there are commitments to providing additional cycle stands off site if proven necessary, and so long as the scheme does deliver the necessary and acceptable public realm and pavement reinstatement scheme to the front of this important building, these will represent a reasonable contribution for the proposal.

132. **Cycle Storage expansion** - There needs to be provision made to expand cycle storage in the scheme, and if it can't be provided on site a contribution would be needed for storage in the public highway. Stands cost £320 each to supply and install, plus a £350 standing charge each time a group are put in (i.e. a single stand would cost £670, twenty stands would cost £6750); precise costs would be on a pro-rata basis, with a maximum contribution of £15,000 to cover all possibilities.

133. As there may be problems in relation to siting the minimum cycle storage in the position shown the legal agreement needs to include an obligation to provide alternative storage elsewhere if necessary.

134. **Traffic Regulation Order** - There is a proposal to provide a loading bay in front of the building that will need a TRO and a 'No Loading' ban across the rest of the frontage at the same time would be appropriate. The cost of the TRO is £1695, and the developer would need to meet the costs of any signs or lines that would need to be provided in a scheme to amend street traffic controls and ensure safe vehicle circulation around the site, such as installing a 'no-stopping at any peak times' regulation or similar measure.

## **Travel Plan monitoring and bond arrangements**

135. Upon commencement of the Full Travel Plan, to be agreed by conditions, the applicants will need to provide £2,500 for the County Council's 5-years monitoring and involvement in the Travel Plan, and provide a commitment to undertaking a Travel Plan Update based on staff, visitor and student travel surveys, and commit to not opening the school without the approved Interim and thereafter Full Travel Plans being in place.

136. The Section 106 Agreement will also need to include a mechanism for reimbursement arrangements (based on the value of the travel plan or sustainable transport improvement contributions), for payment to the City Council of a sum if a breach in the Travel Plan measures has been found to undertake certain measures if the applicant fails to meet the targets or provide the content of the Travel Plan adequately.

## **Equality and Diversity Issues**

### **Age**

137. The scheme will increase the range of available options for further education in Norfolk. By proposing the condition that the scheme be limited to further education use, the development will ensure that 'standard' age schooling is unaffected in local communities.

### **Disability**

138. The works proposed to the listed building ensure that all parts of the development are accessible to wheelchair users and those of limited mobility. The provision of cycle and refuse stores in the western access route might cause some inconvenience to transport accessing the St Giles Citadel via Old Barley Market but it does not preclude such access and Old Barley Market should be able to accommodate minibus turning circles.

### **Gender, Racial Group, Religious Belief, Sexual Orientation**

139. All the above have been considered and there are no detrimental effects to these arising from the development.

## **Conclusions**

140. The impacts on the listed building are considered acceptable as a means to secure the building's continued use whilst offering maximum visibility to the public and minimum detracting of views of the listed building. Whilst the tower and the glazed extension are dramatic additions, their scale has been minimised and retains proportionality consistent with the remainder of the building. Although in some areas the scheme will cause significant alterations and removal of the fabric and plan form of the building, it is considered that the most significant parts and elements of the building will be retained with alterations being respectful to the original layout that will not affect their significance. There are concerns around a number of elements of detail some of which is described above, including materials, retention of historic features and interior layout. Most factors can be addressed by conditions or minor revisions to plans but further updates will be provided to committee as appropriate.

141. The school is strongly supported by planning policy and the highly accessible and sustainable site is particularly appropriate for this use. The scheme will also cause very limited impact on the conservation area and amenity of adjoining properties and neighbours. Any consequent traffic and transport implications will be minimal and the scheme will provide a high quality of design and sustainable construction, being subject to appropriate mechanisms in the travel plan, legal agreement and use of planning conditions. Any detrimental impact felt in the immediate vicinity will be greatly outweighed by the benefits that the scheme will bring in terms of vibrancy and activity to the city centre and the ongoing beneficial

use of the listed building.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Recommendation A (1):

To approve Application No 13/00113/F: Former Fire Station, Bethel Street, Norwich, NR2 1NW, and grant planning permission, subject to:

(1) the completion of a satisfactory S106 agreement by 10 May 2013, to include the provision of contributions to street trees maintenance, traffic management improvements, sustainable site access through cycle provision enhancement, travel plan monitoring and updates and breach reimbursement contributions, and subject to the following conditions:

1. Standard time limit for commencement;
2. Development to be as per plans approved;
3. School shall only be used for older / further education pupils and no other purpose, given space constraints and transport impacts associated with younger pupils;
4. Contamination - investigations and remediation within first 12 months of opening;
5. Contamination - verification report to be agreed;
6. Contamination - long-term monitoring and contingency action plans to be agreed;
7. Contamination – general precautionary measures;
8. Servicing and refuse management plan;
9. Cycle storage scheme to be agreed: (a) provide full storage as shown on plans and details from the outset prior to first use, with capacity to expand provision on-site as needs may determine from the Full Travel Plan; or (b)(i) provide temporary arrangements for 12 months in accordance with a scheme to be agreed in writing, and (ii) provide a permanent solution after 12 months in accordance with a scheme to be agreed in writing, with capacity to expand provision on-site as needs may determine from the Full Travel Plan.
10. Cycle and refuse stores to be in place prior to use.
11. No use until scheme for traffic improvement measures has been agreed;
12. Heritage interpretation / recording measures;
13. Agreement of Interim Travel Plan prior to first use as a school and for 12 months use – to include the ‘car-free school’ agreement for parents and students;
14. Agreement of Full Travel Plan based on outcomes and surveys of Interim Plan after 12 months, and use in perpetuity thereafter – to include the ‘car-free school’ agreement for parents and students and means to increase cycle storage if need exists;
15. Landscaping of the three areas (street, east and courtyard) with standard landscaping requirements, to include evidence of drainage considerations, pedestrian safety / management features to the east, and ability to connect to future improvements in the access route to St Giles Street. Subject to other factors of site investigation and construction programmes, the scheme is to be agreed prior to commencement of use, and provided in complete form within 12 months of first opening;
16. Bethel Street footpath restoration to be provided prior to first opening, in accordance with a scheme to be agreed;
17. Lighting, security lighting scheme and CCTV illumination and surveillance coverage;
18. Specifications and noise mitigation of the lift and associated plant and

machinery such as flues and extracts etc and being able to meet noise requirements specified in report;

19. The following details will be resolved by conditions:

- Type, size and position of roof-mounted Photovoltaic panels, to ensure they are hidden behind the parapet / roof line;
- Samples and specifications of all external materials;
- Joinery, design and materials details on alterations to tender hall and garage doors;
- Joinery, design and materials details for all new doors and windows;
- Final details of new ventilation grilles, vents, extracts, flues and chimneys (e.g. condition 7 of 10/01037/L);
- Details of all existing external features to be removed and retained;
- CCTV and lighting external designs and positions, size, colour and types;
- Design and materials of new door, architrave and surround in east-facing external wall;
- Details of all joinery and glazing to replacement windows new dormer windows in the north elevation of the roof;
- Details of new windows / glazing / replacement louvers in hose tower;
- Joinery details of all dormer window works;
- Materials for all parts of the new extensions, exterior materials and flooring / ramps and rails within;
- Cladding material for the new stair and lift core tower, and method and arrangement of any panels;
- Details of all forecourt street furniture;
- Details of bike and bin stores;
- Details of appearance and positioning of all plant and machinery, flues and grilles, extracts and ducts, chimneys and fans..

20. Water efficiency strategy;

21. Biomass renewable energy investigations to be undertaken, with appraisal of storage, access and listed building impacts, and if approved, implemented as approved;

22. Energy efficiency strategy to be undertaken and further appraisals needed;

23. No installation of any further plant and machinery without prior approval, and any plant and machinery installed shall be enclosed in sound proofing measures.

#### **Informative Notes:**

- Despite what is shown on plans, no permission is given to the signage on the building or the totem sign in the pavement / landscaping scheme, nor the illumination; this needs to be subject to the necessary advertisement consents and/or full planning permissions as appropriate.
- Notwithstanding the details shown on the plans, exterior materials of the cladding of the stair and lift tower need to be agreed, with emphasis on the material and appearance being softer and less intrusive in skyline, and to be precise in its cladding seam appearance etc.

**(Reasons for approval:** The recommendation is made with regard to the objectives of the National Planning Policy Statement and the Government's position within ministerial statements, the provisions of the local development plan and all material planning considerations including emerging planning policy.

The school is strongly supported by planning policy and the highly accessible and

sustainable site is particularly appropriate for such use, causing very limited impact on the conservation area and amenity of adjoining properties and neighbours and an acceptable degree of alteration to the listed building given the sensitive designs proposed to secure the retention of the most significant elements of the historic building. Any consequent traffic and transport implications will be minimal and the scheme will provide a high quality of design and sustainable construction. Subject to appropriate mechanisms in the travel plan, fulfilment of the obligations within the legal agreement and use of planning conditions, any detrimental impact felt in the immediate vicinity will be greatly outweighed by the benefits that the scheme will bring in terms of vibrancy and activity to the city centre and the ongoing beneficial use of the listed building. As such, subject to fulfilment of the conditions and provisions of the legal agreement, the development is considered to be in accordance with the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework, Policies 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 11, 19 and 20 of the adopted Joint Core Strategy for Norwich, Broadland and South Norfolk (2011), and saved policies NE4, NE9, HBE8, HBE9, HBE12, EP1, EP10, EP16, EP17, EP18, EP22, EMP19, TRA3, TRA5, TRA6, TRA7, TRA8, TRA10, TRA11, TRA12, TRA14, TRA18, TRA24, TRA26, TVA8, AEC1 and CC3 of the adopted City of Norwich Replacement Local Plan (2004) and all other material considerations.

**Article 31(1)(cc) 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. Following extensive pre-application discussions, and post-submission negotiations with the applicant and subsequent amendments to address some areas of concern, the application has been approved subject to appropriate conditions and provisions of the legal agreement and for the reasons outlined above.

**Recommendation A (2):**

(2) where a satisfactory S106 agreement is not completed prior to 10 May 2013, that delegated authority be given to the Head of Planning Services to refuse planning permission for Application No 13/00113/F: Former Fire Station, Bethel Street, Norwich, NR2 1NW, for the following reason:

**(Reason for refusal of planning application 13/00113/F:** In the absence of a legal agreement or undertaking relating to the provision of street trees in new developments, transport improvements and sustainable transport enhancement, and travel plan provision and ongoing fulfilment, the proposal is contrary to saved policies NE4, TRA3, TRA10 and TRA12 of the adopted City of Norwich Replacement Local Plan (2004).)

**Article 31(1)(cc) 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. Although the local planning authority has advised the applicant of the requirements needed to make the scheme acceptable, the proposal has not been able to be accompanied by an appropriate legal agreement to facilitate the successful implementation and operation of the proposal in question, and can not therefore be considered acceptable for the reasons outlined above.

**Recommendation B:**

To approve Application No 13/00115/L: Former Fire Station, Bethel Street, Norwich,

NR2 1NW, and grant listed building consent, subject to the following conditions:

1. Standard time limit
2. Development to be in accordance with plans as approved, unless conditions dictate otherwise;
3. Notwithstanding images shown on approved plans, the signage is not to be in the positions shown and a scheme needs to be submitted to agree methods of fixing and final position and appearance of signs and totem etc.
4. Schedule of all extraneous and redundant features to be removed (e.g. flues, stairs and pipes), and removal prior to commencement of use.
5. Scheme to be agreed for details of all existing internal features to be retained (e.g. condition 3 of 10/01037/L);
6. Schedule of all repairs proposed, materials involved etc.
7. Make repairs and restorations as may be necessary during construction;
8. Conditions regarding materials:
  - New glazing top be added to front garage and entrance doors – details of materials, design, positions and fixings;
  - Details of glazing walls and doors behind entrance doors – methods and positions of fixings;
  - Proposals for new handrails to staircases etc;
  - Details of chimney alterations within interior;
  - Joinery, design and materials details for all new doors;
  - Details of all new partition walls and screens, and precise positions / methods of fixing (e.g. library/classroom and library/reprographics dividers);
  - Details of the main hall / reception top-hung moveable wall design and positioning in situ;
  - CCTV and lighting methods of fixing;
  - Details of all works to create new openings and architraves within the building;
  - Details of any secondary glazing behind existing and new windows;
  - Improved proposals for designed-in features of floorplan identification in the level 3 classroom of the accommodation block (retained officer flat layout)
  - Internal service connections for plant and machinery etc.
  - Details of extract flues etc (e.g. condition 7 of 10/01037/L);
  - Details of new structural support for the central stack within the west accommodation block.

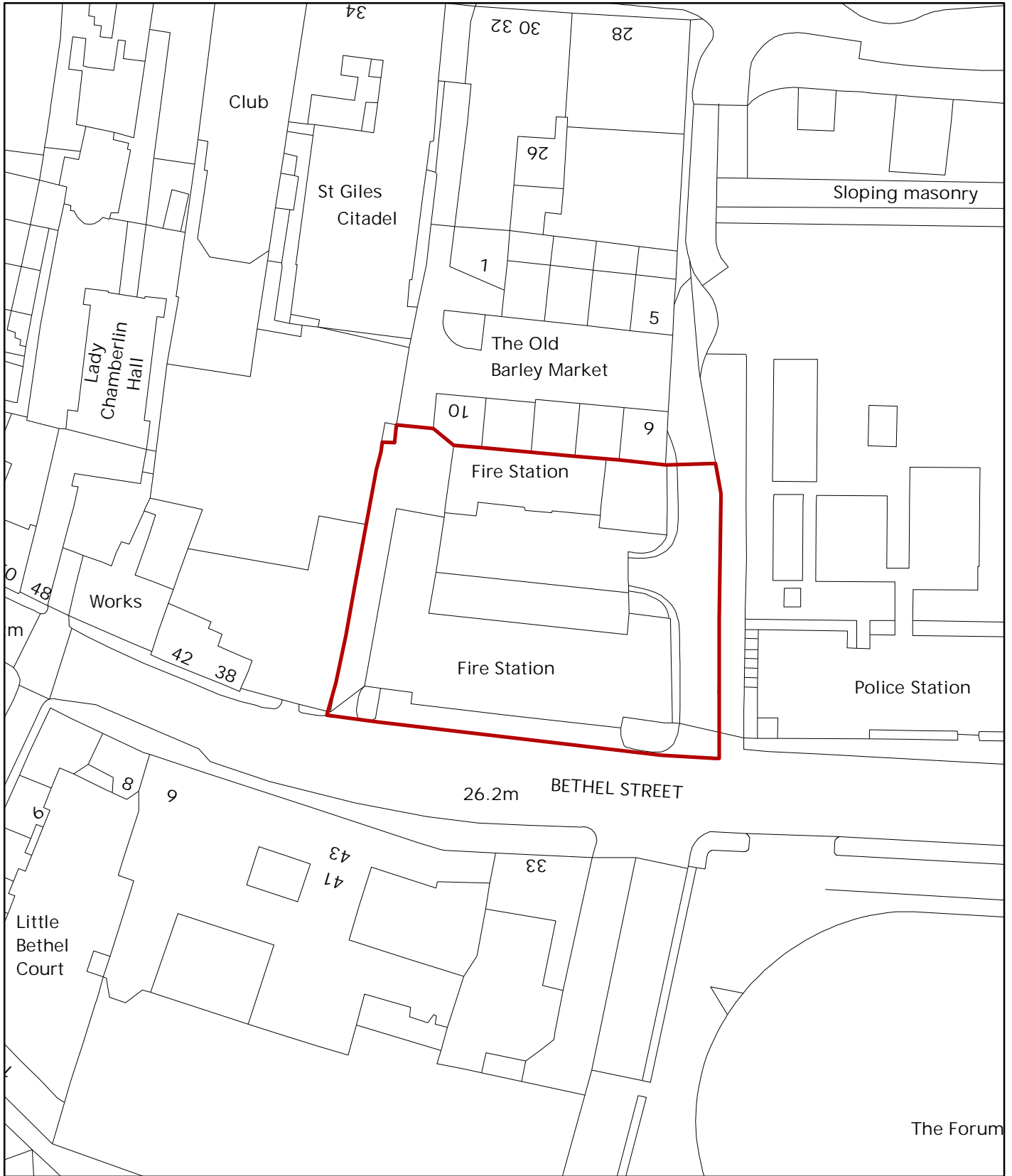
### **Informative Notes:**

- No illumination allowed by virtue of this permission, and advice offered that subtle up-lighting may be more appropriate rather than the internally illuminated signage that has no historical or neighbouring context.

**(Reasons for approval:** The recommendation is made with regard to the objectives of the National Planning Policy Statement, the provisions of the local development plan and all material planning considerations including emerging planning policy. The impacts on the listed building are considered acceptable as a means to secure the building's continued use whilst offering maximum visibility to the public and minimum detracting of views of the listed building. Whilst the tower and the glazed extension are dramatic additions, their scale has been minimised and retains proportionality consistent with the remainder of the building. Although in some areas the scheme will cause significant alterations and removal of the fabric and plan form of the building, it is considered that the most significant parts and elements of the building will be retained with alterations being respectful to the original layout that will not affect their significance. As such, subject to the development complying with the conditions imposed, the works are acceptable and in accordance with the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework, Policies 2 and 11 of the adopted Joint Core Strategy for Norwich, Broadland and South Norfolk (2011), and saved policies HBE9 and HBE12 of the adopted City of Norwich Replacement Local Plan (2004) and all other material considerations.)

**Article 31(1)(cc) 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. Following extensive pre-application discussions, and post-submission negotiations with the applicant and subsequent amendments to address some areas of concern, the application has been approved subject to appropriate conditions and for the reasons outlined above.



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Planning Application No 13/00113/F & 13/00115/L  
 Site Address Former Fire Station, Bethel Street  
 Scale 1:750

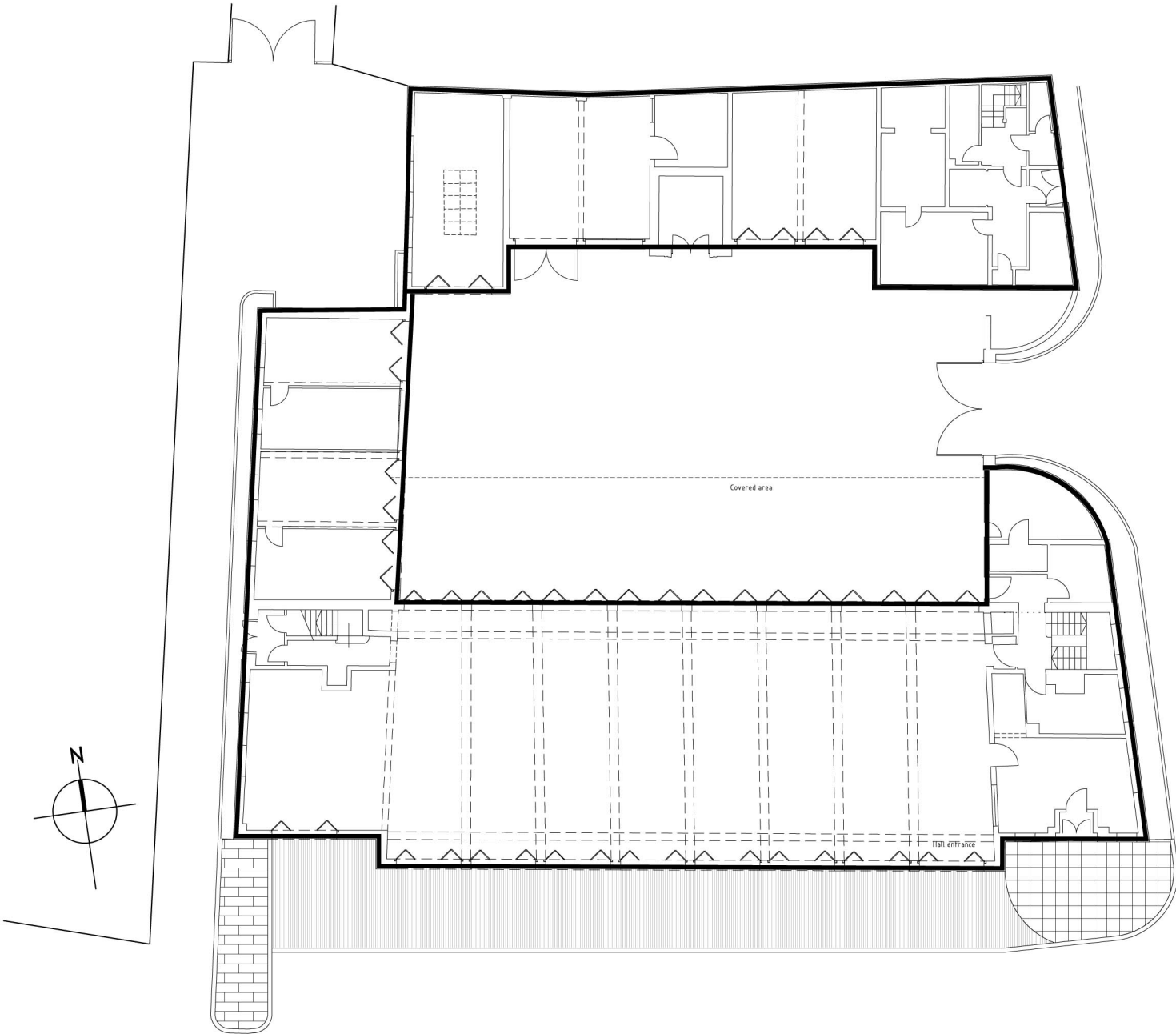


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**City Council**  
 PLANNING SERVICES



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A	First issue	16.01.13	TTL	EG
Revisions		Date	Drawn	CHK'd

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**Willmott Dixon**

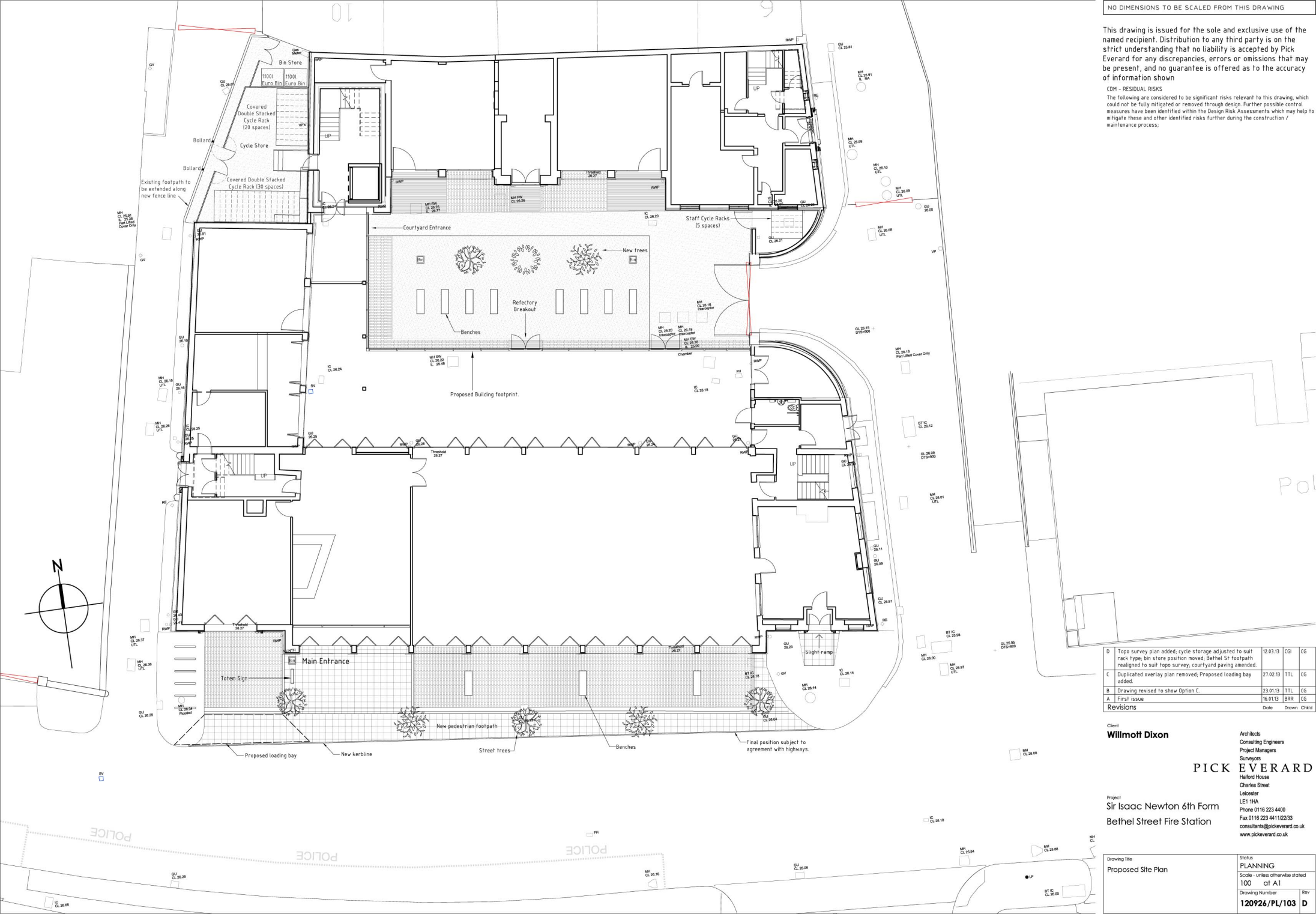
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Project  
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Drawing title Existing Site Plan	Status PLANNING Scale - unless otherwise stated 100 at A1 Drawing Number 120926/PL/102	Rev A
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D	Topo survey plan added; cycle storage adjusted to suit rack type; bin store position moved; Bethel St footpath realigned to suit topo survey; courtyard paving amended	12.03.13	CGI	CG
C	Duplicated overlay plan removed; Proposed loading bay added	27.02.13	TTL	CG
B	Drawing revised to show Option C.	23.01.13	TTL	CG
A	First issue	16.01.13	BRR	CG

Revisions

Date	Drawn	Chkd
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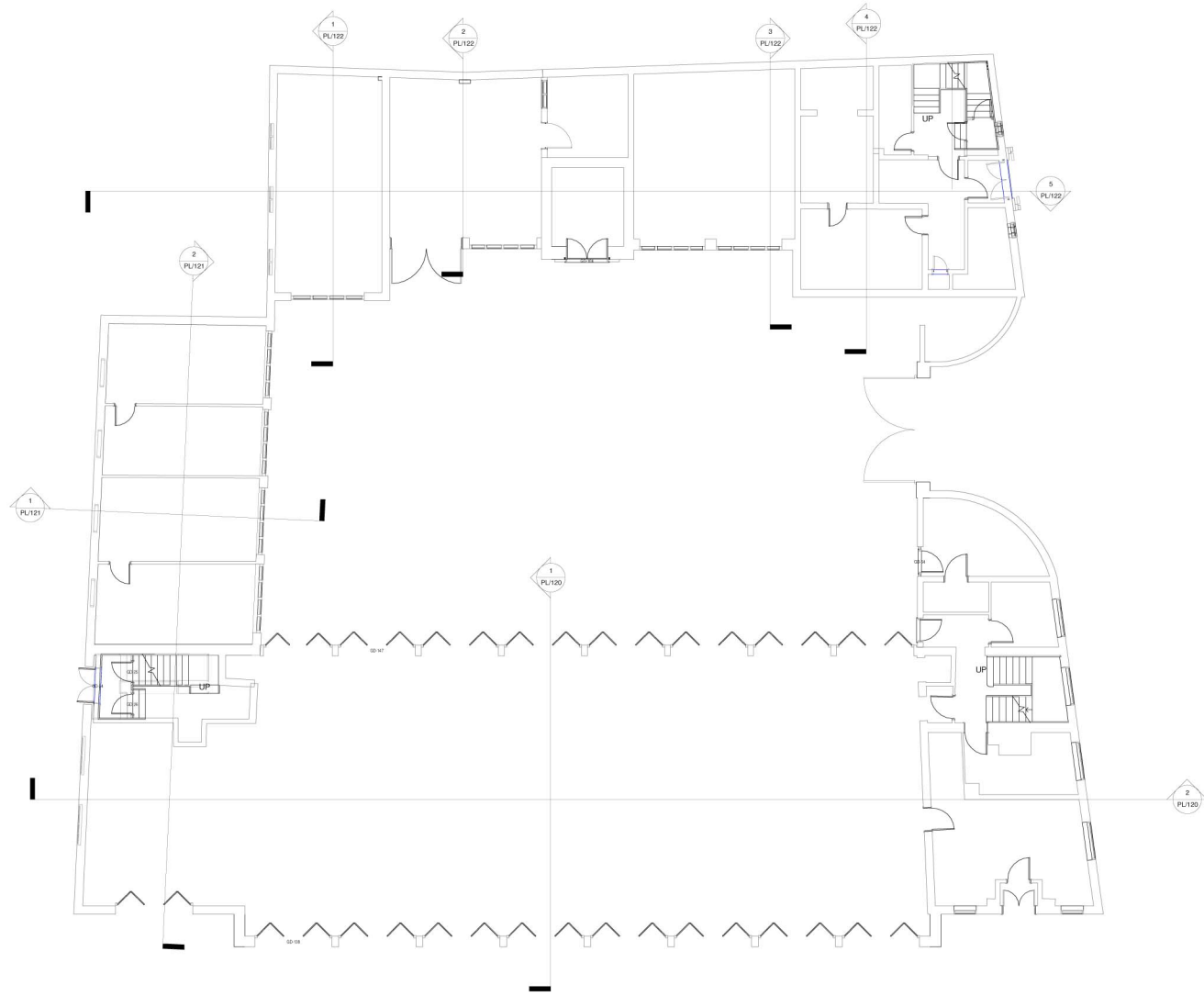
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Drawing Title	PLANNING	Status	100 of A1
Scale	various otherwise stated	Rev	120926/PL/103
Drawing Number	120926/PL/103	Rev	

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1 00 - Level 0  
PL/110 1:100

Revisions	Date	Drawn	CHK'd
A. First Issue	18/01/13	ACS	CG

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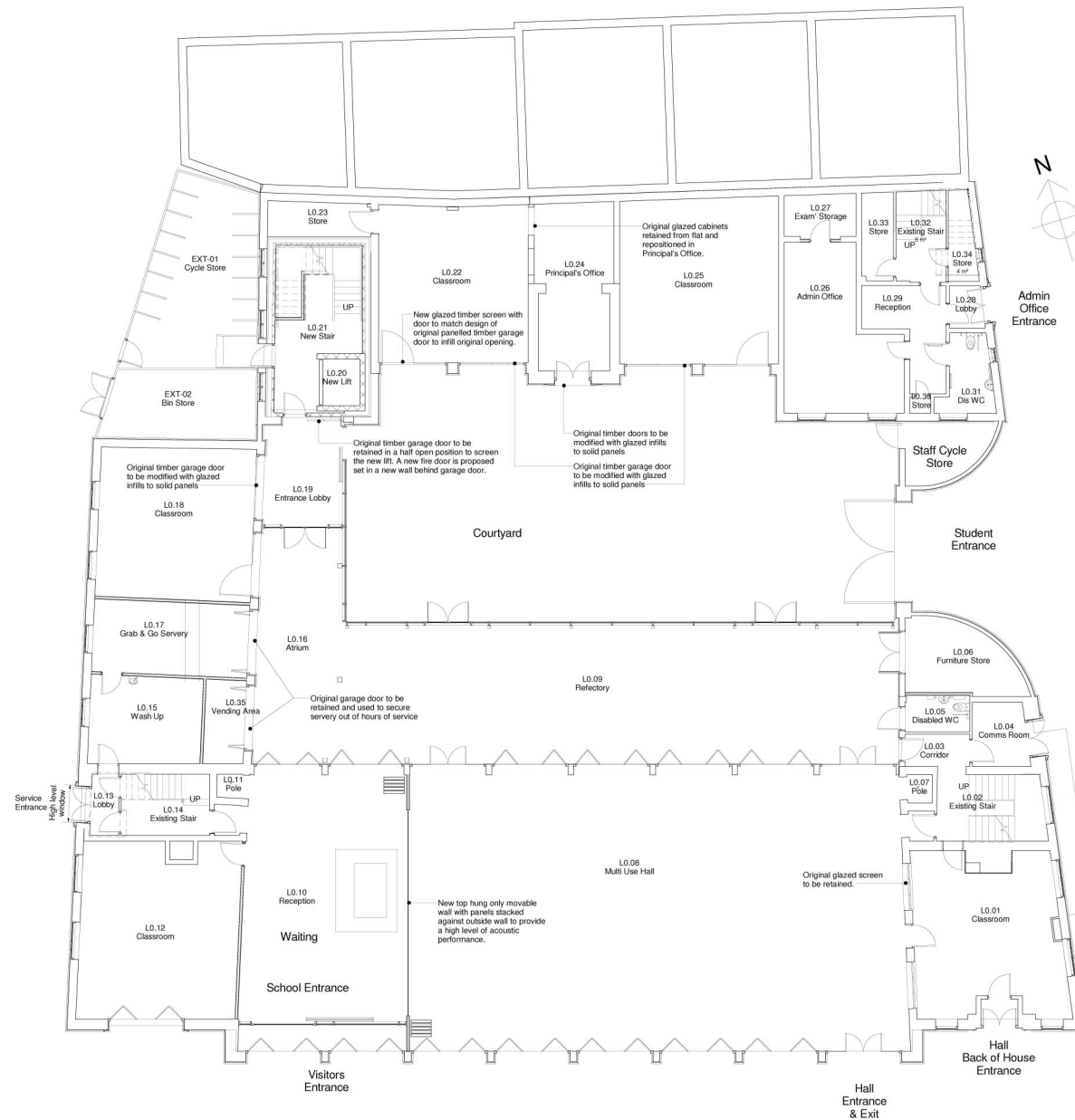
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Drawing Title	Status
Existing Floor Plan - Level 0	PLANNING
Scale - unless otherwise stated	at A1
1 : 100	Rev
Drawing Number	120926 / PL/110
	A

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Rev	Description	Date	Drawn	Checked
E	Sliding door added to School Entrance and Entrance Lobby. Room number added.	06.03.13	ACJ	CG
D	Wall between Reception & Multi Use Hall changed to movable wall	07.02.13	ACJ	CG
C	Minor amendments to Option C	30.01.13	ACJ	CG
B	Drawing revised to show Option C	23.01.13	ACJ	CG
A	First Issue	16.01.13	ACJ	CG
<b>Revisions</b>				
			CG	Drawn: CHJ

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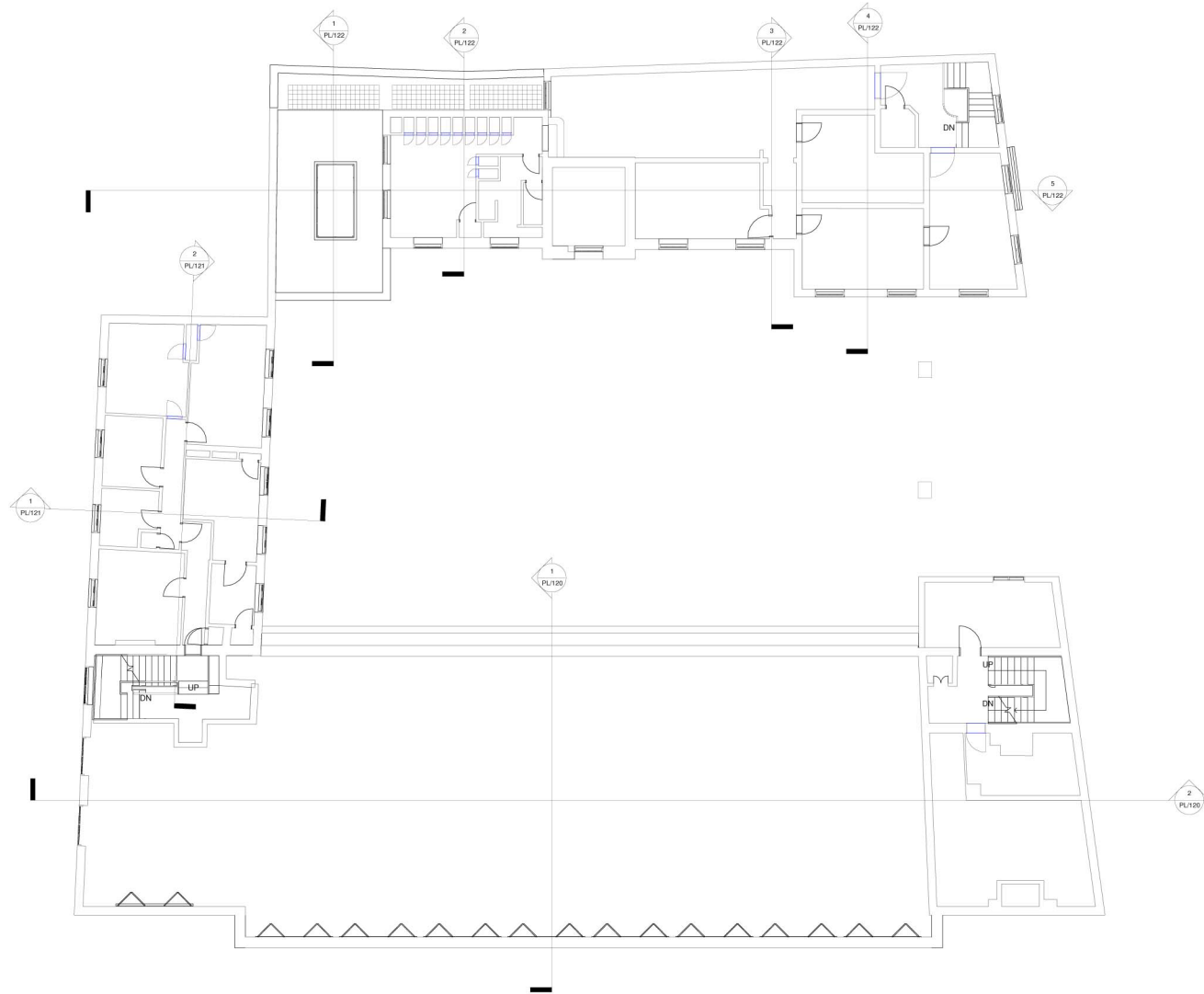
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Drawing Title		Status
Proposed Floor Plan - Level 0		PLANNING
Scale - unless otherwise stated		1:100 at A1
Drawing Number	Rev	
<b>120926 / PL/210</b>	<b>E</b>	

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1 01 - Level 1  
PL/111 1:100

Revision	Date	Drawn	CHK'd
A	18/01/13	ACS	CG

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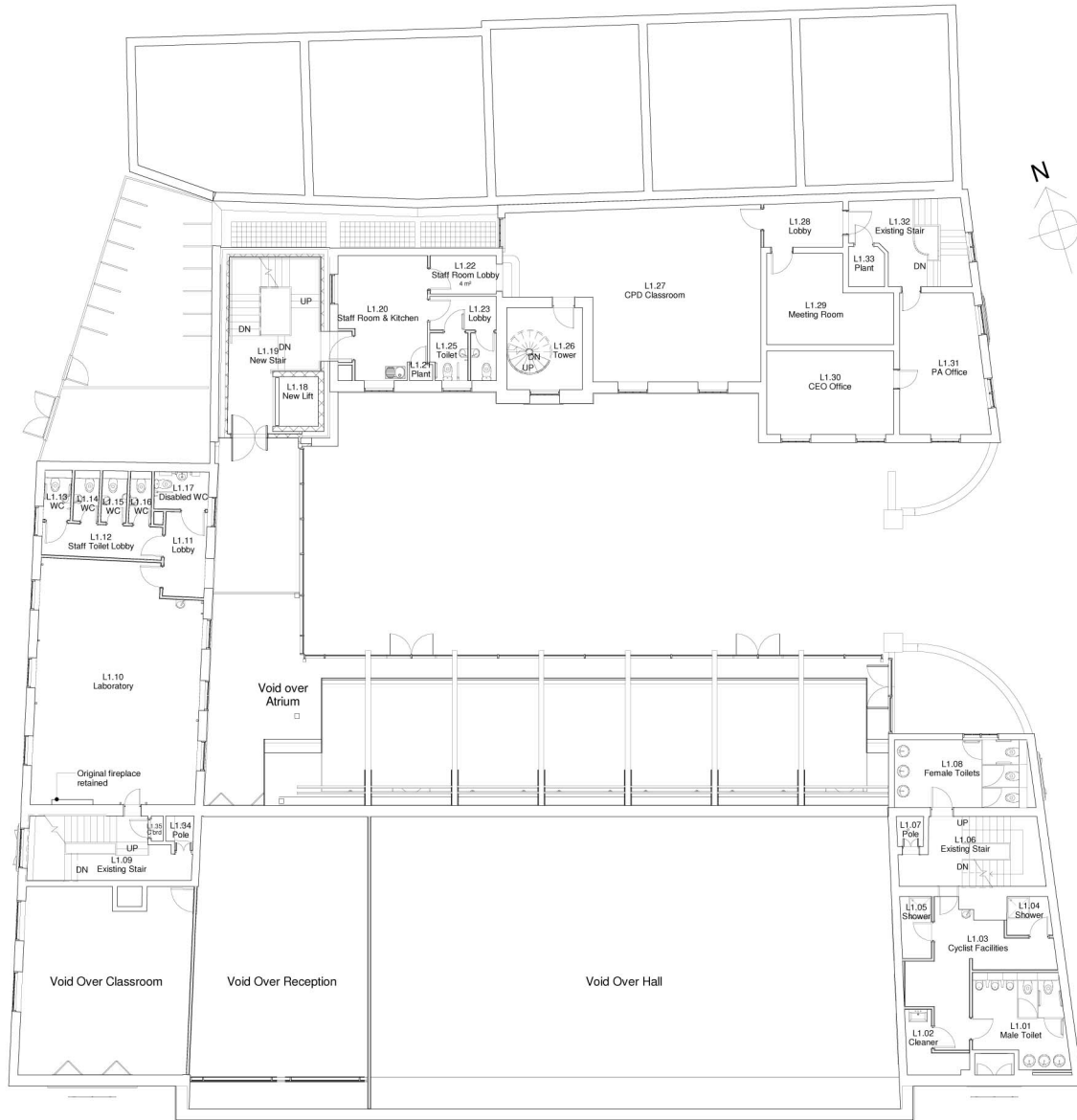
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Drawing Title	Status
Existing Floor Plan - Level 1	PLANNING
Scale - unless otherwise stated	1 : 100 at A1
Drawing Number	Rev
<b>120926 / PL/111</b>	<b>A</b>

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1 PL - 01 - Level 1  
PL/211 1:100

D	Room number added	06.03.13	TFL	CG
C	Minor amendments to Option C	30.01.13	ACS	CG
B	Drawing revised to show Option C	23.01.13	ACS	CG
A	First Issue	16.01.13	ACS	CG
Revisions		Code	Drawn	Chk'd

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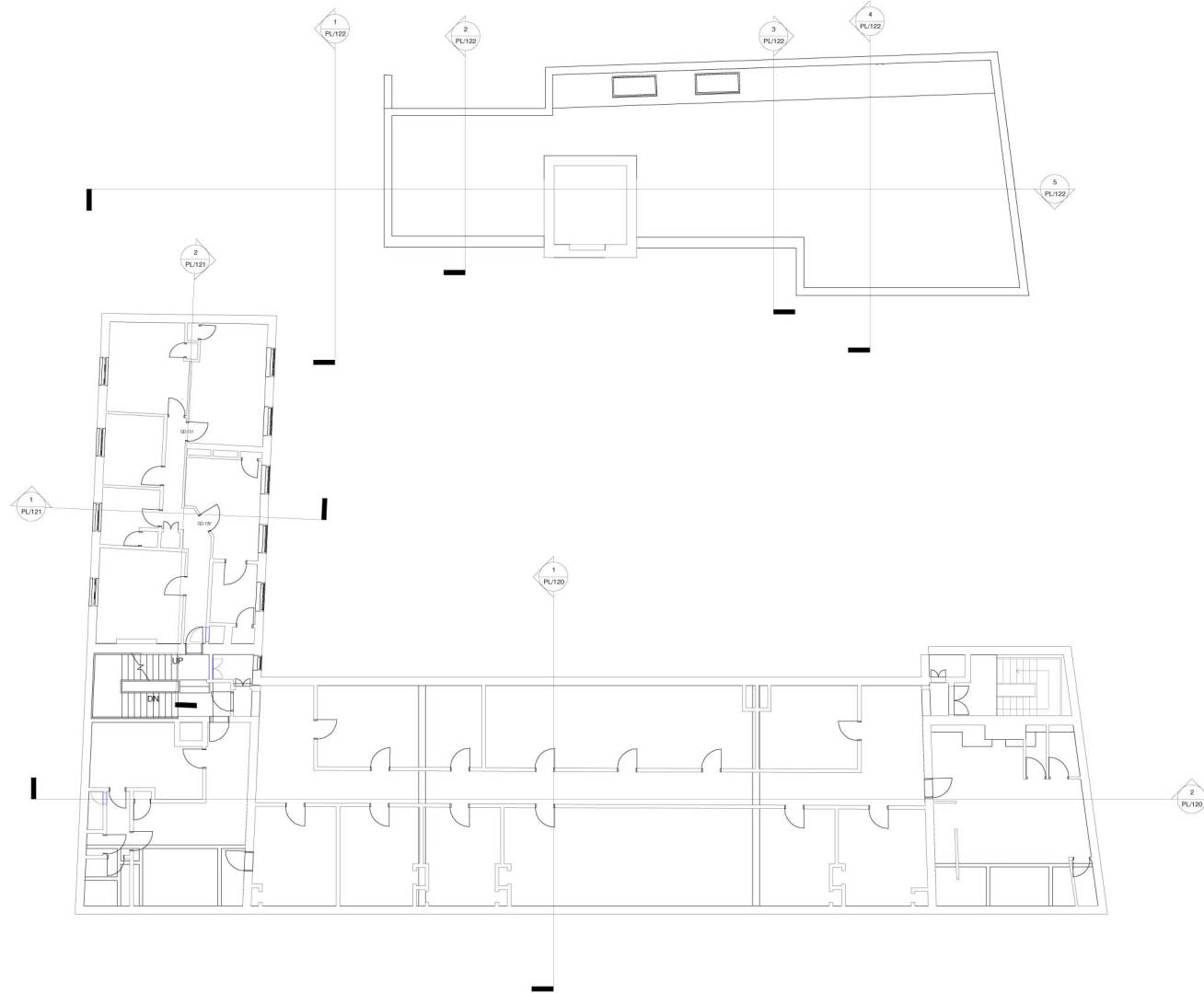
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Drawing Title	Status
Proposed Floor Plan - Level 1	PLANNING
Scale - unless otherwise stated	1 : 100 at A1
Drawing Number	Rev
<b>120926 / PL/211</b>	<b>D</b>

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1 03 - Level 3  
PL/113 1:100

Revision	Date	Drawn	CHK'd
A	18/01/13	ACS	CG

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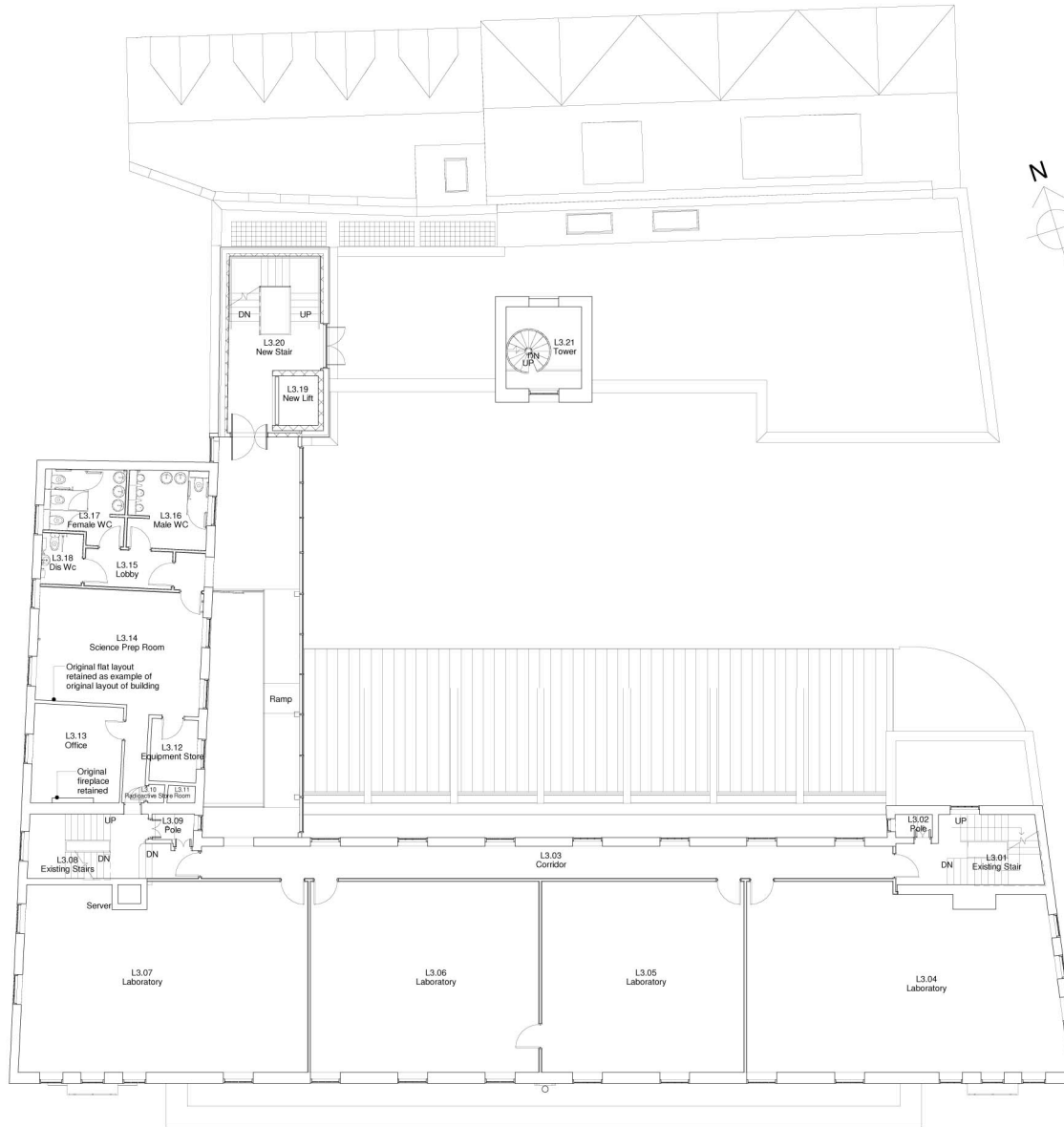
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Drawing Title	Status
Existing Floor Plan - Level 3	PLANNING
Scale - unless otherwise stated	at A1
Drawing Number	Rev
<b>120926 / PL/113</b>	<b>A</b>

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D. Toilets layout developed. Room number added.	06.03.13	TFL	CG
C. Minor amendments to Option C	30.01.13	ACS	CG
B. Drawing revised to shown Option C	23.01.13	ACS	CG
A. First Issue	16.01.13	ACS	CG
Revised:	Drawn:	Drawn:	Drawn:

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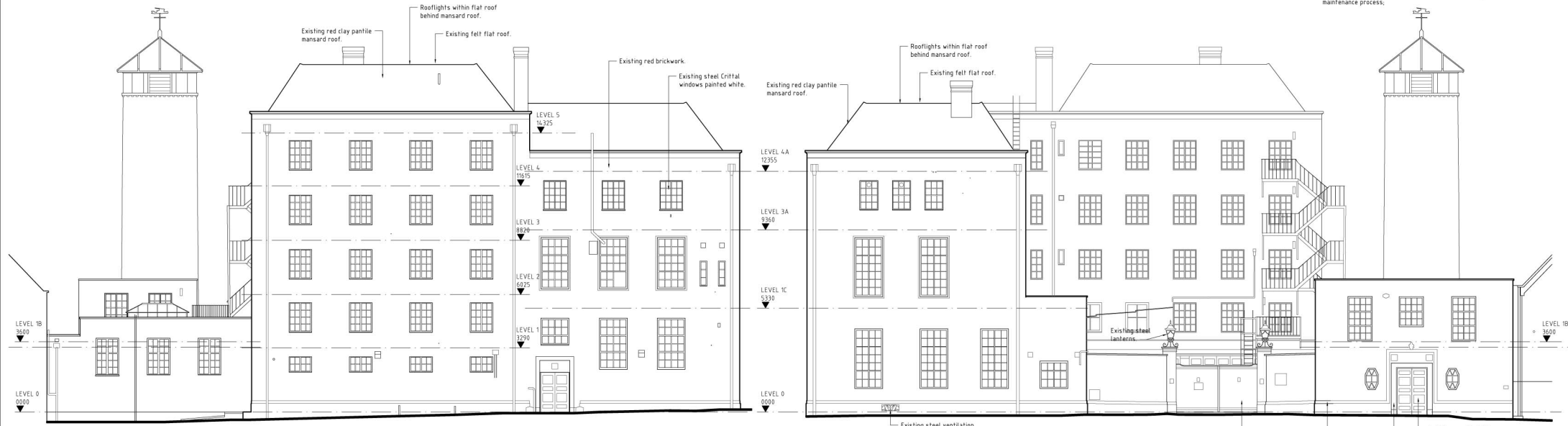
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Drawing Title	Status
Proposed Floor Plan - Level 3	PLANNING
Scale - unless otherwise stated	1 : 100 at A1
Drawing Number	Rev
<b>120926 / PL/213</b>	<b>D</b>

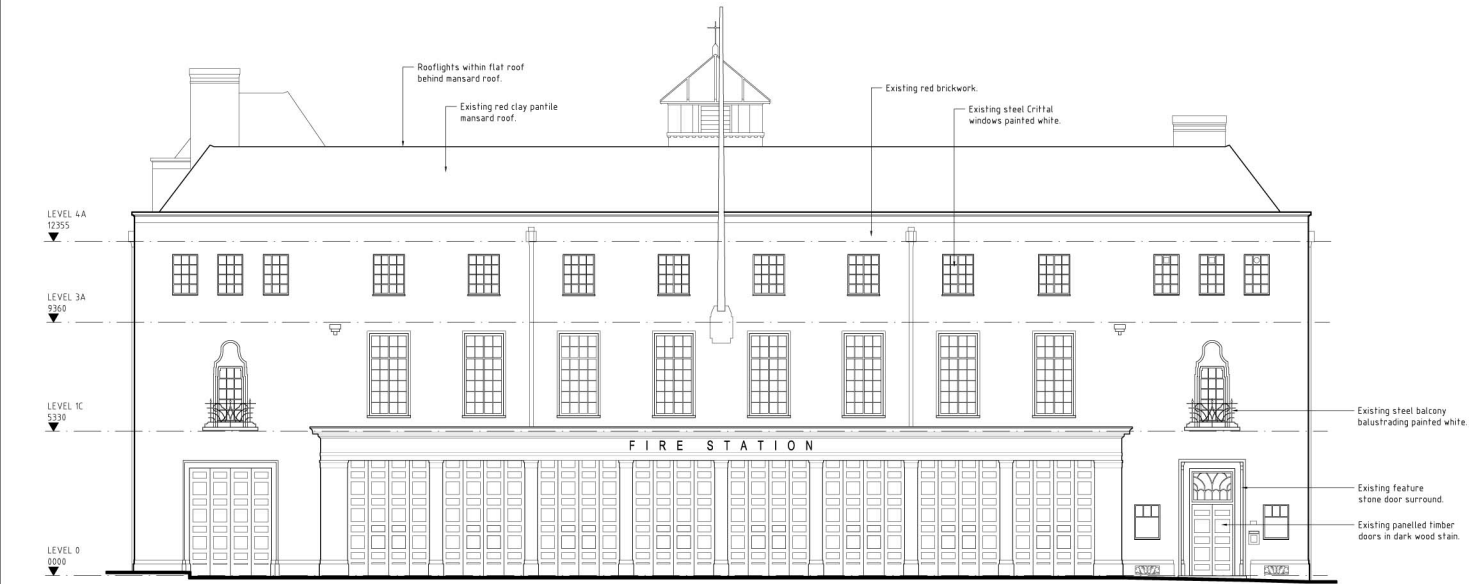
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WEST ELEVATION

EAST ELEVATION



SOUTH ELEVATION

B	Notes added	16.01.13	JV	CG
A	First issue	09.01.13	JV	CG
Revisions		Date	Drawn	CHK'd

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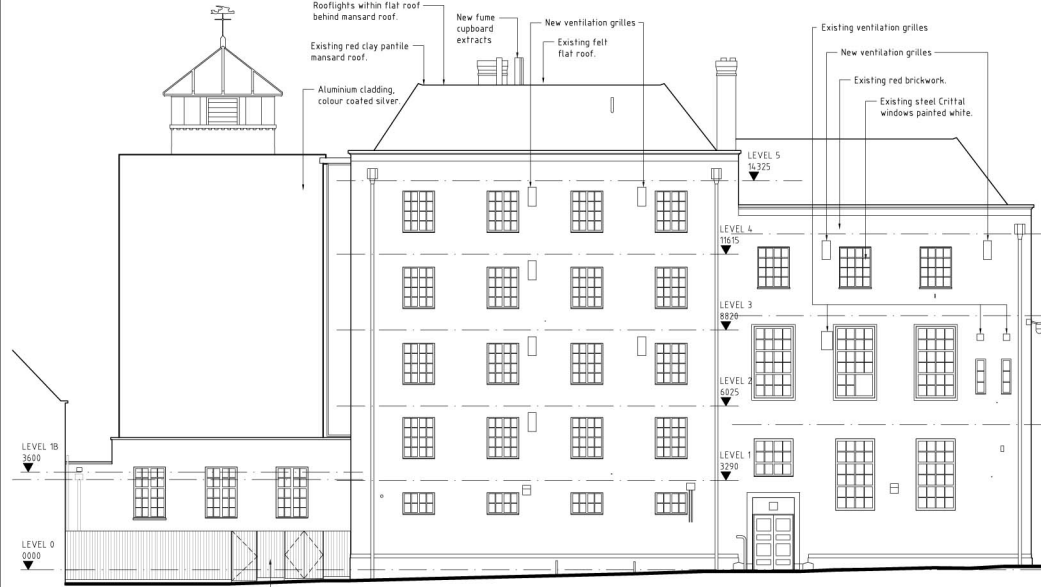
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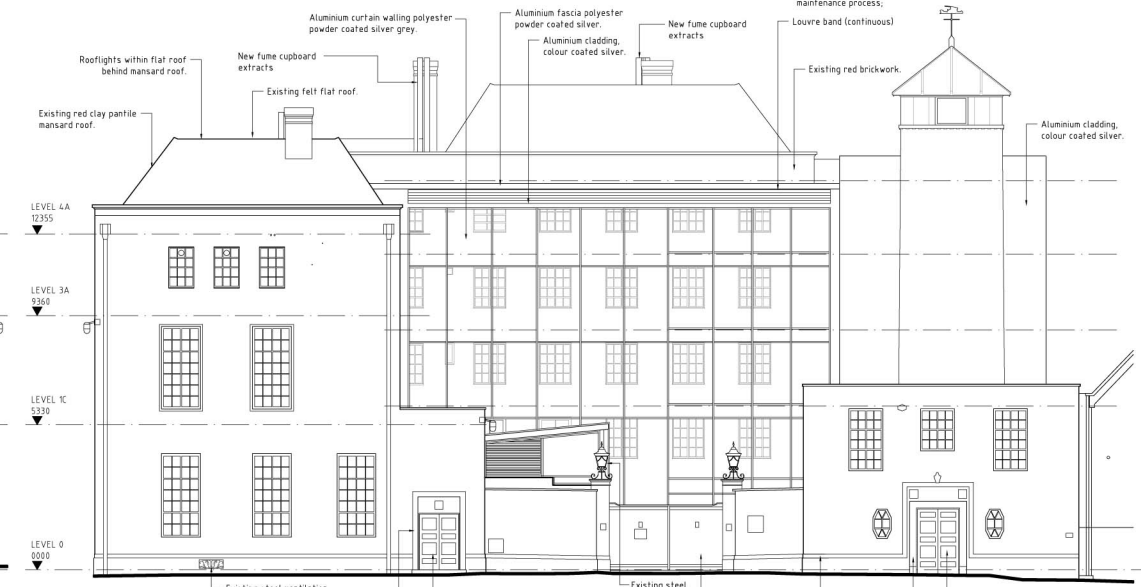
Drawing Title	Status
Existing External Elevations	PLANNING
	Scale - unless otherwise stated
	1:100 at A1
Drawing Number	Rev
120926/PL/250	B

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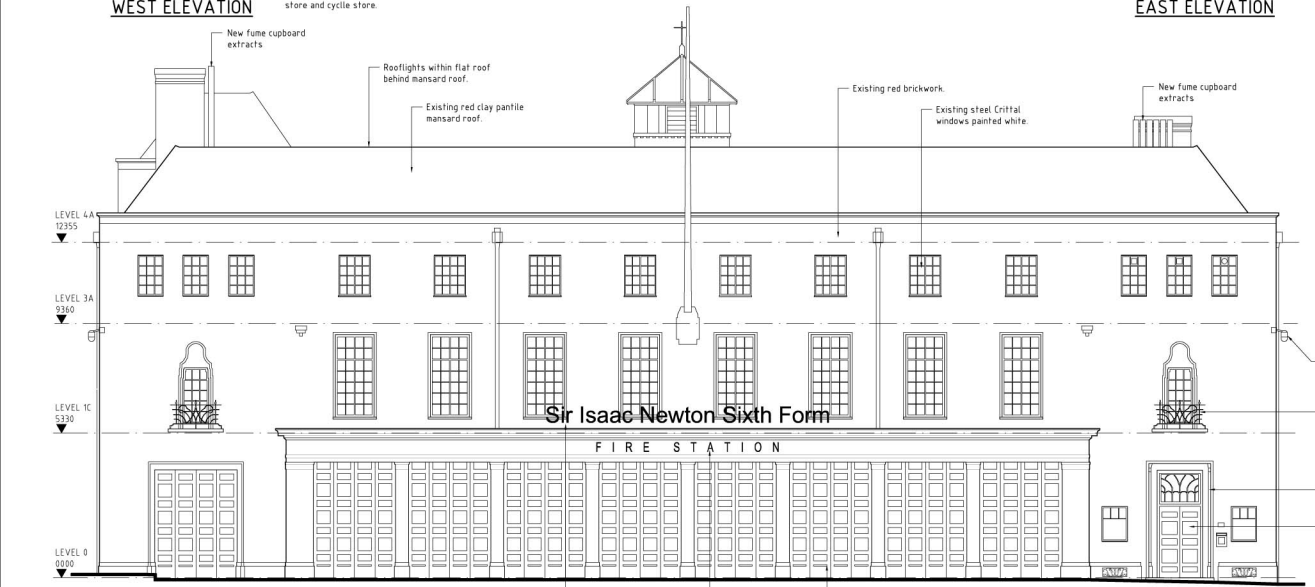
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**WEST ELEVATION**



**EAST ELEVATION**



**SOUTH ELEVATION**

F	Extract flues and ventilation grilles shown	15.03.13	ACS	CG
E	Note of existing doors amended on South Elevation.	06.03.13	F.T.L.	CG
D	Minor amendments to Option C	30.01.13	ACS	CG
C	Drawings revised to show Option C	23.01.13	ACS	CG
B	Option 2 selected as main option. Annotation added.	16.01.13	J.V.	CG
A	First issue	09.01.13	J.V.	CG
<b>Revisions</b>		Date	Drawn	Checkd

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Drawing Title <b>Proposed External Elevations</b>	Status <b>PLANNING</b>
Scale - unless otherwise stated <b>1:100 at A1</b>	Rev
Drawing Number	<b>120926/PL/260 F</b>