

Report to Planning applications committee
Date 6 December 2012
Report of Head of Planning Services
Subject 12/01783/F Norwich Lower School Bishopgate Norwich
NR1 4AA

Item
6(8)

SUMMARY

Description:	Erection of single storey extension to provide 2 No. additional classrooms.
Reason for consideration at Committee:	Objection
Recommendation:	Approve
Ward:	Thorpe Hamlet
Contact Officer:	Miss Sarah Platt Planning Officer - Development Management 01603 212500
Valid Date:	29th September 2012
Applicant:	Mr Bruno Delacave
Agent:	Mr Robin Bertram

INTRODUCTION

The Site

Location and Context

1. The application site is accessed from the south side of Bishopgate and sits on the northern boundary of the Norwich Lower School playfield. To the north of the site are the rear gardens of properties fronting Bishopgate which are locally listed, and the car park serving the school. To the east and south are the playing fields of the Lower School which form part of the functional flood plain. To the west lies Hooks Walk which is a pedestrian through route from the Cathedral Close to Bishopgate. Beyond is the Cathedral Precinct and The Close and Norwich Cathedral is situated approximately 200m to the west. There are a plethora of listed buildings in the character area of the City Centre Conservation Area although none immediately adjacent to the application site, the buildings proposed to be extended are viewed in significant views across the playing fields towards The Great Hospital in the north west.
2. The application buildings are modern, predominantly single storey buildings constructed of modern pantiles and brown bricks. They have been modestly extended incorporating a stepped design and various hipped roofs which appear visually cumbersome. These buildings and the adjacent pavilion were rebuilt in the 1980s following a fire. The two storey pavilion building which sits immediately adjacent is constructed of the same materials and of the same design and character.

Constraints

3. The site is situated within the functional flood plain (zones 3a and 3b), is within the City Centre Conservation Area in the Cathedral Close Character Area which is classified as having very high significance.

Planning History

4. Several minor applications have been approved at this site for the installation of new windows, replacement drainage systems, the installation of children's play equipment and the erection of fire escapes but the main planning history relevant to this case is listed below:
 - In 2003 under application reference 4/2003/0439 planning permission was granted for the erection of two steel framed storage units.
 - In 2005 planning permission was granted under application reference 05/00727/F for the erection of a single storey extension to provide classrooms and larger staffrooms. These form the various hipped roofs and stepped extensions to the east of the school building.
 - In 2008 application reference 08/00623/F sought permission for the conversion of the garages to the north of the site to be converted into additional changing facilities and WCs following the expansion of the school.
 - Application number 10/00202/F granted planning permission for the erection of a single storey store and two garages for use as an annex to the school.

Equality and Diversity Issues

There are no significant equality or diversity issues.

The Proposal

5. The application seeks to extend the Lower School buildings to the east towards the Pavilion building in order to provide additional music and science classrooms.

Representations Received

6. Advertised on site and in the press. Adjacent and neighbouring properties have been notified in writing. 5 letters of representation have been received, 3 objecting, 1 making a representation and 1 in support. The issues raised are as summarised in the table below.

7.

Issues Raised	Response
The planned building will block the view from my dwelling and block sunlight into the garden areas. The noise from the rooms used as music classrooms will be a nuisance. The science classrooms will increase the potential for accidental explosion or chemical contamination. Extending the buildings will be unsympathetic in the Conservation Area.	See paragraphs 13-18, 28 and 29.

The extension of this unsympathetic building will compound the already negative impact it has on the Conservation Area and highly significant buildings within its immediate vicinity. Views from public pedestrian routes will be harmed and the extension will compromise the open feel of the playing fields.	See paragraphs 13-16
The proposals will erode the highly significant character of the surrounding area. The expansion will allow more pupils resulting in increased traffic congestion.	See paragraphs 13-16, and 19-22
<u>Representations</u>	Response
Providing increased traffic is managed as stated in the consultations by the School with local residents then there are no objections.	See paragraphs 19-22.
<u>Supporting comments</u>	Response
The Norwich Society: The scheme fits neatly between the Pavilion and other classrooms. It is a sensitive and sensible addition.	N/A.

Consultation Responses

8. Historic Environment Service – No objections. Standard monitoring conditions required.
9. Local Highway Authority – No objections, please condition the requirement for a Travel Information Plan. The proposal for an additional bike rack to house 25 number cycles is welcomed.
10. Norfolk Police – Secured by Design objectives should be incorporated where possible. Object to the recessed doorway and entrance. (recess now deleted)
11. Environment Agency – No objections.

ASSESSMENT OF PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Relevant Planning Policies

National Planning Policy Framework:

- Statement 4 – Promoting sustainable transport
- Statement 7 – Requiring good design
- Statement 8 – Promoting healthy communities
- Statement 10 – Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
- Statement 12 - Conserving and enhancing the historic environment
- Statement 11 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Relevant policies of the adopted East of England Plan Regional Spatial Strategy 2008

- SS1 - Achieving Sustainable Development
- T14 - Parking
- ENV7 - Quality in the Built Environment
- ENV6 - The Historic Environment

Relevant policies of the adopted Joint Core Strategy for Broadland, Norwich and South

Norfolk 2011

- Policy 1 – Addressing climate change and protecting environmental assets
- Policy 2 – Promoting good design
- Policy 6 – Access and transportation
- Policy 20 - Implementation

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

- NE3 - Tree protection, control of cutting and lopping
- NE9 - Comprehensive landscaping scheme and tree planting
- HBE2 – Protection of standing remains in Cathedral Precinct and other priority areas
- 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
- EP22 - High standard of amenity for residential occupiers
- TRA6 - Parking standards - maxima
- TRA7 - Cycle parking standards
- TRA8 - Servicing provision
- TRA12 – Travel plans

Supplementary Planning Documents and Guidance

City Centre Conservation Area Appraisal (September 2007)

Main Issues Including Principle

12. The NPPF (paragraph 72) gives great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools in order to meet the needs of existing and new communities. The proposals to extend the Norwich Lower School are considered to be in support of this objective and are therefore considered acceptable in principle.

Design

Design & Layout

13. The proposed extension seeks to infill the area between the existing classrooms and pavilion building by extending out 15m to the east of the existing classrooms to within 2m of the pavilion. The building will take the current building line and simplify the many hipped roofs into a simpler form. The materials proposed will match the existing materials and this will be conditioned. The scale of the proposed extension is considered to be in keeping with the character of the existing building and will not result in any detrimental visual impact on the existing built form.

Listed Buildings and Conservation Area – Impact on Setting

14. In the immediate vicinity are a number of locally listed buildings and statutorily listed buildings including The Great Hospital and Anglican Cathedral. Whilst the application buildings are viewed in the wider context of these surrounding buildings the extension, by virtue of its size and position, is not considered to impact on the setting of these highly significant buildings or have a negative impact on long range views.
15. In addition, the impact of the development proposals on the wider Conservation area is not considered to be detrimental. These buildings are not the most attractive but they are considered to be functional structures of their time and commonly seen in school grounds.. The simplification of the roof and plan form is considered to be a positive benefit of the scheme and will reduce the visual impact of the development in wider views.
16. The proposals are therefore considered to be in accordance with saved local plan policies HBE8, HBE9 and HBE12.

Impact on Living Conditions

Noise and Disturbance

17. Concerns have been raised by local residents over increased noise levels through use of some of the proposed classrooms as music rooms. The proposed music classrooms are to be situated in the centre of the proposed extension as self-contained rooms with no external windows. It is not considered that use of these rooms will result in any significant noise emission from the building or would result in a statutory nuisance to neighbouring residential dwellings.

Overshadowing

18. Concerns have been raised with regards to the potential for loss of direct sunlight into particular areas of the rear gardens of residential properties fronting Bishopgate. The proposed extension is single storey, being 4.4m to the ridge height of the roof. At their closest point the rear elevations of the residential properties fronting Bishopgate are in the region of 30m from the boundary with the school building and most have standard height boundary treatments in the form of fences or mature vegetation in the form of hedges. It is not considered that the erection of a single storey extension to the school building will result in significant enough loss of daylight or direct sunlight to warrant refusal of the application.

Transport and Access

Cycling Parking

19. In addition to the existing cycle parking provision for parking for 12 cycles a further stand providing provision for an additional 25 cycles is proposed under this application. This accords with the requirements of local plan policy TRA7 and is considered to be a positive benefit of the scheme.

Travel Plan

20. In order to promote the use of alternative sustainable methods of transport other than the car and in addition to the increased provision of cycle parking an updated Travel Information Plan for the school will be conditioned on any approval granted and this is considered acceptable and to be in accordance with the requirements of saved local plan policy TRA12 of the local plan.

Servicing

21. Additional servicing requirements as created by this proposed extension will be incorporated into the existing servicing arrangements which are considered acceptable.

Traffic Impact

22. The School have confirmed in writing that there is to be no increase in pupil numbers. The prime purpose of the proposed Lower School extension is to improve the teaching and learning facilities for existing pupil numbers. In addition, as a number of the existing Lower School classrooms are small, the additional new classrooms and enlargement of an existing classroom, will allow greater flexibility. Further, no objections have been raised by the Local Highway Authority. The provision of additional cycle parking provision and an update to the Travel Plan for the school are considered to mitigate any potential, minimal, rise in traffic movements as a result of these proposals.

Environmental Issues

Flood Risk

23. The site is within flood zone 3 and forms part of the functional flood plain. The proposed use as an educational establishment, classed as a 'more vulnerable use' would not normally be considered an appropriate use for such a location however these proposals seeks an extension to an existing facility. In addition, the proposed extensions are to be

built on an existing area of hard standing and therefore will not have a negative impact on existing run off rates of surface water drainage.

24. As the new extension is less than 250sqm (170sqm) there is no requirement for a sequential or exception test. In any case, given it would be impractical to locate additional classrooms elsewhere the sequential test would be passed.
25. The submitted Floor Risk Assessment makes several recommendations with regards to a flood evacuation plan, signing up to the Environment Agencies Floodline and construction techniques to minimise the impact of flood as much as possible. A condition requiring compliance with the recommendations of the Flood Risk Assessment will be imposed on any permission granted.

Archaeology

26. The Heritage Environment Service. Subject to the imposition of monitoring conditions being attached to the permission have raised no objections.

Trees and Landscaping

Loss of Trees or Impact on Trees

27. The Council's Tree Protection Officer is satisfied that providing full compliance with the submitted Arboricultural documentation is conditioned that the scheme is achievable. In addition, a further condition should be imposed with regards to the detailed specifications and construction methodology for the proposed emergency fire escape footpath.

Other Material Considerations

28. The proposal is not considered to be a potentially significant hazard to warrant refusal of the application on the grounds of health and safety.
29. The loss of the view from habitable room windows over the school playing fields is not a material planning consideration.

Local Finance Considerations

30. The Localism Act 2011 amended S.70 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to require local planning authorities to have regard to local finance considerations in the determination of planning applications, alongside the development plan and other material considerations. Business Rates (with potentially Charity Relief) is payable.

Conclusions

31. The proposed extension is considered to be acceptable and in accordance with the aims of the NPPF and local plan saved policies. There is not considered to be any detrimental impact on the character of the existing building, wider Conservation Area or on the setting of surrounding Listed Buildings. Subject to compliance with conditions the proposals are considered to meet all nation and local planning policies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended to approve Application Number 12/01783/F (Norwich Lower School) and grant planning permission, subject to the following conditions:-

Conditions:

- 1) Standard Time Limit Condition
- 2) In accordance with details submitted
- 3) Works on site in accordance with submitted AIA
- 4) Detailed specification including section drawings and details of construction methodology for fire escape footpath on northern boundary
- 5) Matching Materials

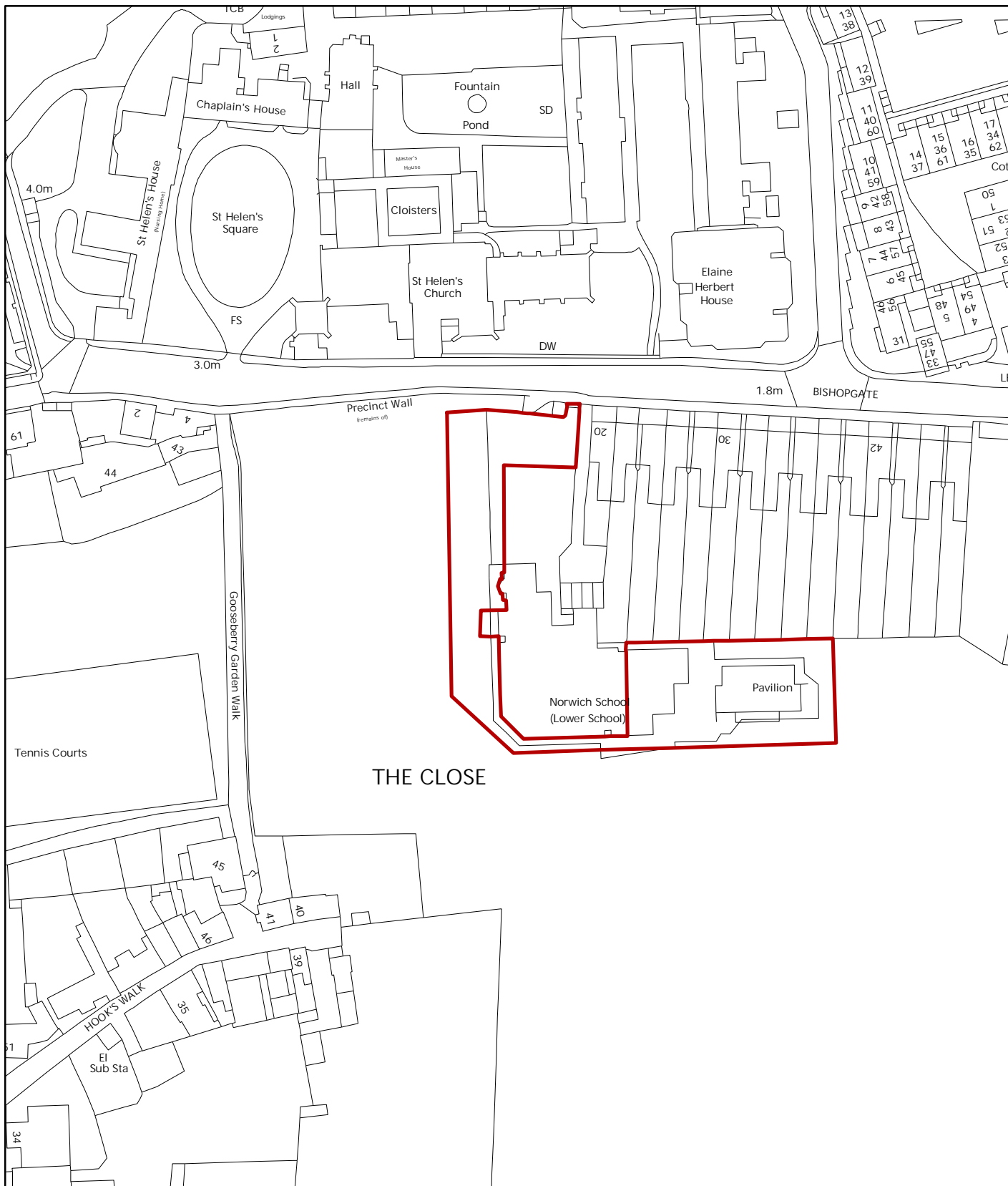
- 6) Archaeology – Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI)
- 7) Archaeology – Compliance with WSI
- 8) Archaeology – No occupation or use until investigation completed
- 9) Archaeology – Stop work if unidentified features revealed
- 10) Travel Information Plan required
- 11) Relocation of existing cycle parking provision and provision of new cycle parking prior to any works on site.
- 12) Compliance with submitted Floor Risk Assessment recommendations.

Informatives:

- 1) Secured by Design principles as outlined in the comments of Norfolk Police should be incorporated where possible.
- 2) Construction Working Hours
- 3) Archaeological Brief and Heritage Environment Record requirements.

Reasons for approval:

- 1) The proposed extension is considered to be acceptable by virtue of its scale, form, design, height and layout. There is not considered to be any detrimental impact on the character of the existing building, wider Conservation Area or on the setting of surrounding Listed Buildings as a result of these proposals. Subject to compliance with the conditions imposed on this decision the proposals are considered to provide for sufficient cycle parking, and appropriate mitigation measures as the works will affect trees and there is the potential for archaeological finds. Therefore the proposals are considered to be in accordance with the NPPF, policies SS1, T14, ENV6 and ENV7 of the East of England Plan Regional Spatial Strategy 2008, policies 1, 2, 6 and 20 of the adopted Joint Core Strategy for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk 2011 and saved local plan policies NE3, NE9, HBE2, HBE3, HBE8, HBE9, HBE12, EP22, TRA6, TRA7, TRA8 and TRA12 of the adopted City of Norwich Replacement Local Plan 2004.



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Planning Application No 12/01783/F

Site Address Norwich Lower School Bishopgate

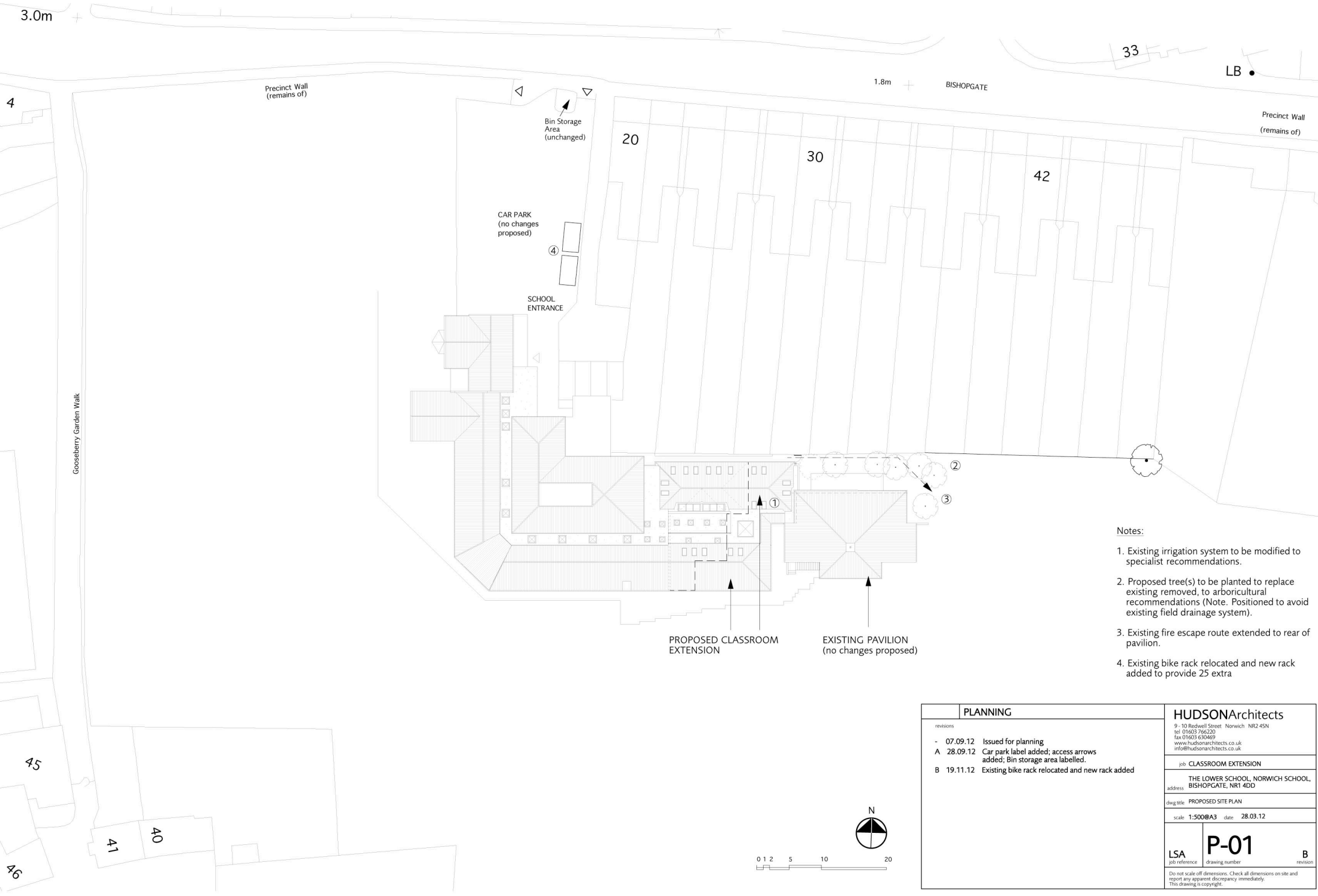
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NORWICH
City Council

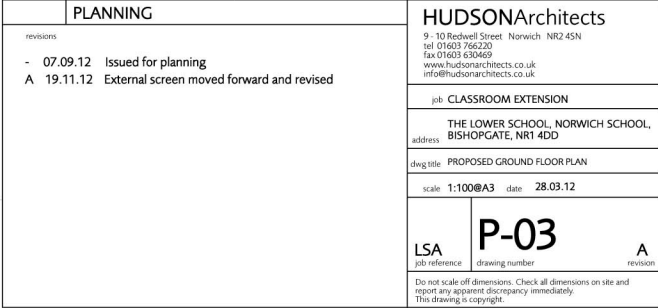
PLANNING SERVICES

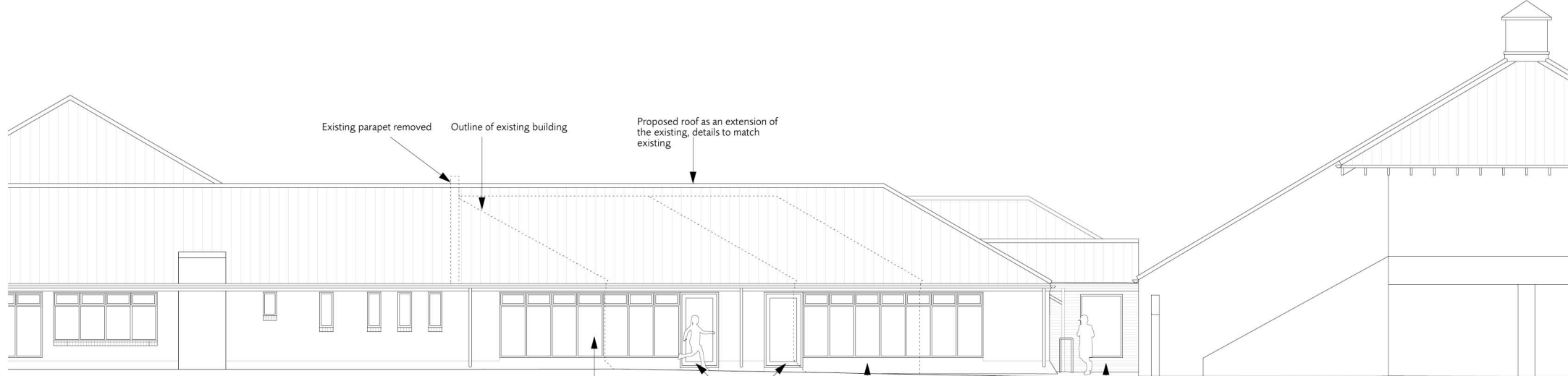




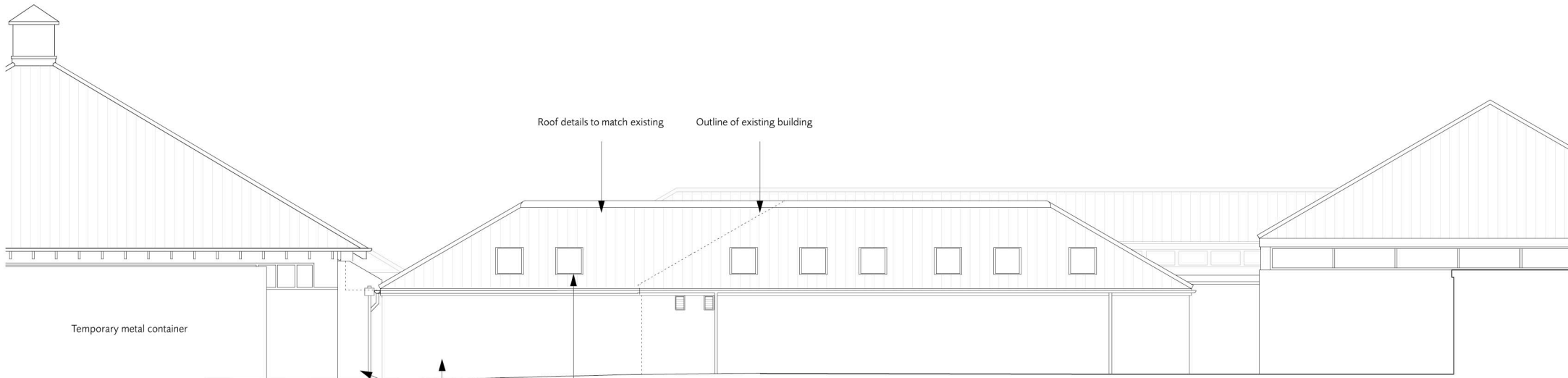
- Notes:
- Existing irrigation system to be modified to specialist recommendations.
 - Proposed tree(s) to be planted to replace existing removed, to arboricultural recommendations (Note. Positioned to avoid existing field drainage system).
 - Existing fire escape route extended to rear of pavilion.
 - Existing bike rack relocated and new rack added to provide 25 extra

PLANNING		HUDSONArchitects	
revisions		9 - 10 Redwell Street Norwich NR2 4SN tel 01603 766220 fax 01603 630469 www.hudsonarchitects.co.uk info@hudsonarchitects.co.uk	
- 07.09.12 Issued for planning		job CLASSROOM EXTENSION	
A 28.09.12 Car park label added; access arrows added; Bin storage area labelled.		address THE LOWER SCHOOL, NORWICH SCHOOL, BISHOPGATE, NR1 4DD	
B 19.11.12 Existing bike rack relocated and new rack added		dwg title PROPOSED SITE PLAN	
		scale 1:500@A3 date 28.03.12	
LSA		P-01	
job reference		drawing number	
		B	
		revision	
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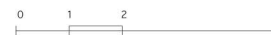




Front Elevation



Rear Elevation



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- 07.09.12 Issued for planning		job CLASSROOM EXTENSION	
A 19.11.12 Rain water pipe relocated; rail added		address THE LOWER SCHOOL, NORWICH SCHOOL BISHOPGATE, NR1 4DD	
		dwg title PROPOSED ELEVATIONS	
		scale 1:100@A3 date 28.03.12	
LSA		P-05	
job reference		drawing number	
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