

**Planning Applications Committee
11th June 2009
Section**

Agenda Number:	C3
Section/Area:	Inner
Ward:	Mancroft
Officer:	Mark Brown
Valid Date:	17th April 2009
Application No:	09/00282/F
Site Address:	Monastery Court Elm Hill Norwich
Proposal:	Construction of a brick enclosed electrical substation adjacent to the Monastery Court building.
Applicant:	Norwich University College of the Arts
Agent:	Hudson Architects

THE SITE

The site is located at Monastery Court, between the Monastery Court Building, a large locally listed 2½ storey pitched roof building, and the rear of grade II listed properties at Monastery Court and Elm Hill. This part of the site is currently used for three private parking spaces. The site is also located within the City Centre Conservation Area and the main area of archaeological interest.

PLANNING HISTORY

Application no. 09/00033/F was approved on 20 March 2009 for modifications and alterations to the Monastery Court building. This application included the provision of a new glass reinforced plastic (GRP) enclosed sub-station on the same site with a timber structure and metal gates to screen it from view. Conditions on this consent included details of noise mitigation measures to be submitted and details of the colour and finish of the fence and gate to surround the sub-station.

THE PROPOSAL

The proposal is for a brick enclosed electrical sub-station with powder coated louvered doors. The enclosure measures 3.3m x 3.6m with a height of 3.4m rising slightly at one end due to a small parapet to conceal the flat roof.

CONSULTATIONS

Advertised on site, in the press and adjacent neighbours notified. Four letters of objection received from occupiers of properties on Elm Hill and Monastery Court raising the following concerns:

- Impact of noise from the sub-station through the louvered doors;
- The height of the sub-station being higher than the adjacent boundary wall would stop light entering garden areas;
- The site is surrounded by listed buildings and will be 3.75 metres from a historic dwelling and garden and very close to three further historic dwellings;
- Impact on the rear view of Listed Buildings along Elm Hill;
- The powder coated doors are inappropriate for a conservation area of very high significance;
- Concern over electromagnetic emissions;

Norwich Society: The proposal has been situated in a highly inappropriate site surrounded by listed buildings and too close to the river. Visually it will impair the view of the backs of the Elm Hill properties. We object in the strongest possible terms that this has been put in the wrong location.

Central Norwich Citizens Forum: We have to object to this revised application. Although we support casing the substation in brick to reduce intrusive sound we are concerned that the new structure is considerably higher than the original GRP one. Monastery Car Park is in parts pretty raw but the buildings around it are all special. The backs of the Elm Hill buildings in particular - well illustrated in the site photo - also make passers-by aware of an important historic environment. They will be largely hidden by the current proposal. The brick structure will also loom larger in the small garden of 1 Monastery Court to the south and that of 18 Elm Hill, a garden which has in the past been considered special enough to be opened to the public.

Norfolk Landscape Archaeology: If planning permission is granted, we ask that this be subject to a condition for a programme of archaeological work in accordance with Planning Policy Guidance 16, Archaeology and Planning.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Relevant National Planning Policy
PPS1 – Delivering Sustainable Development
Supplement to PPS1 – Planning and Climate Change
PPG15 – Planning and the Historic Environment
PPG16 – Archaeology and Planning
PPG24 – Planning and Noise

Relevant East of England Plan Policies:

ENV6 – The Historic Environment

ENV7 – Quality in the Built Environment

Relevant Local Plan Policies:

HBE3 – Area of main archaeological interest

HBE8 – Development in Conservation Areas

HBE12 – High Quality Design

EP22 – Amenity

Principle

The sub-station is required in order to support the efficient running of the Monastery Court Building and electricity supply to the local area. The Monastery Court Building is currently used as studio space with little energy requirements but is to be utilised for the digital department which will have far greater energy requirements. The sub-station would provide for the needs of the art school but would also be able to provide the future needs of the area.

The main issues to consider in this case are neighbour amenity and design including the impact on the setting of the Conservation Area and surrounding buildings.

Amenity

In relation to the issue of height and overshadowing, the proposed sub-station will be approximately 700mm higher than the wall and trellis along the boundary of the Elm Hill properties and set back 500mm from this boundary. Given the sub-stations location to the north of the Elm Hill gardens it is not considered that the proposal would cause any overshadowing.

With reference to noise, part of the reasoning behind the application for a brick enclosed structure is to improve acoustic insulation over and above the approved GRP enclosure. It is recommended that any consent be the subject of a condition to ensure that the sound level at the external face of the nearest residential window is at an appropriate level. Subject to this condition it is not considered that there would be any significant detrimental impact on neighbour amenity as a result of noise pollution.

The issue of electromagnetic fields, as far as they have implications for health, are a material planning consideration. There is no specific Government guidance on sub-stations and the planning system, however, the government have adopted the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) guidelines which electricity operators follow. For the purposes of telecommunications equipment under PPG8 the Government have advised that subject to compliance with these guidelines there should be no further need to consider the health implications further under the planning system. On this basis it is considered that the proposals are acceptable in terms of their health implications.

Location and Design

The sub-station will be a utilitarian building in an area which is dominated by significant and important buildings in the Conservation Area. However, in this context the proposed location is considered to be the most appropriate. The location is in a small service yard used for parking and with views from one side. Public views of the substation would be limited to a relatively small area of the Monastery Court Car Park. The sub-station would not be seen from the river and nor would it obstruct any key views or aspects of Listed Buildings.

A number of objectors have suggested alternative locations between the Monastery Court Building and the River, however, it is considered that this would be far more dominant in the context of the Conservation Area and in key views of Listed Buildings.

The building will be higher than the boundary walls of the Elm Hill properties. This is partly due to the need to raise the site for level access to avoid water running down into the sub-station. The height would partly obscure views of the rear of Elm Hill properties. Although it is not considered that there would be an impact significant enough to justify any refusal of the application on these grounds.

The quality of materials used will be essential and it is recommended that brick samples, mortar mix and colour of the powder coated louvers be a condition of any consent.

Conclusion

On balance it is considered that the proposals are acceptable and subject to the conditions listed below the proposals would not have any significant detrimental impact on neighbour amenity, the appearance of the conservation area or the setting of any Listed Building.

RECOMMENDATIONS

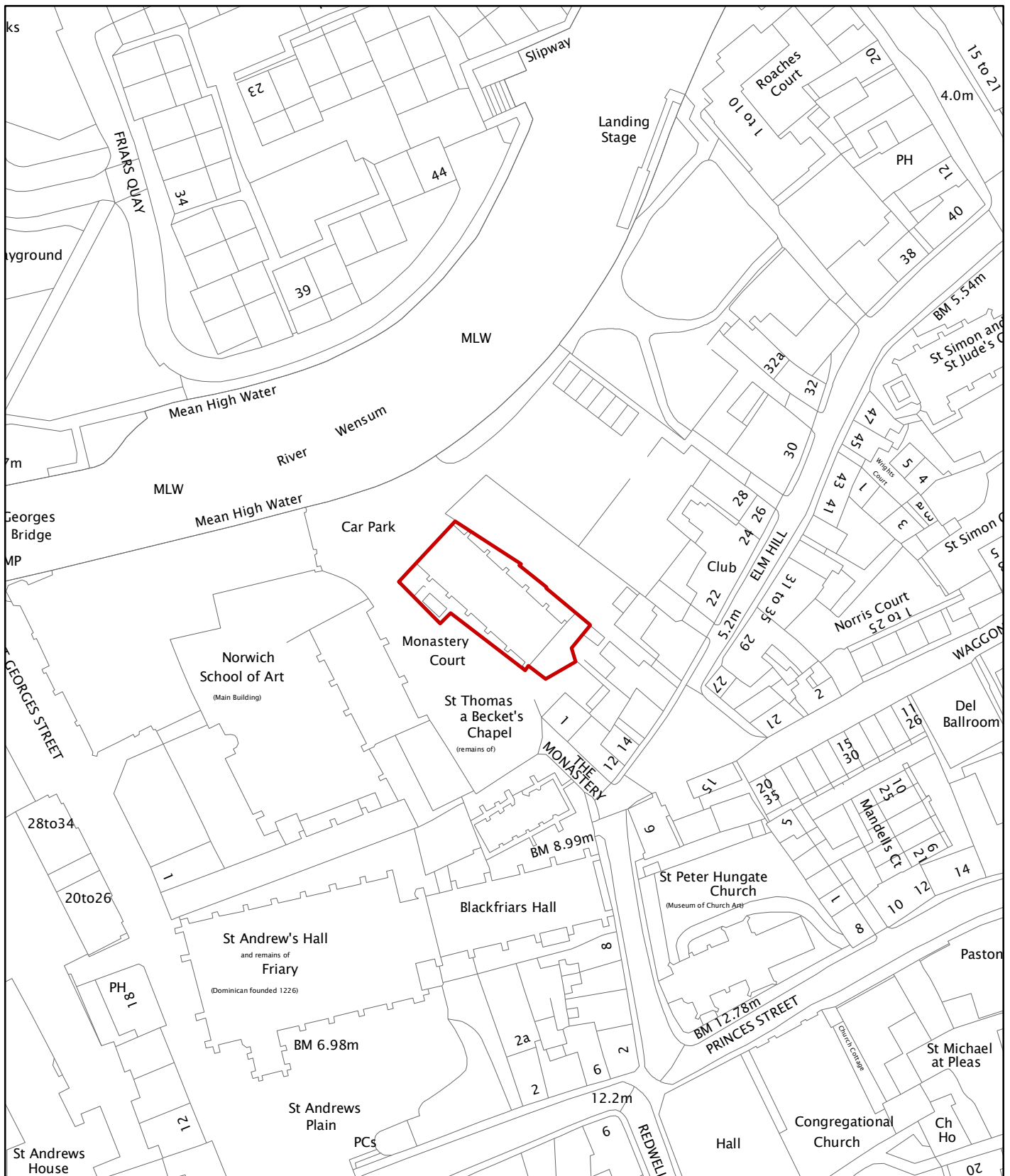
Approve planning permission subject to the following conditions:

- Standard time limit;
- A scheme of noise mitigation measures to be submitted;
- Details of materials, including samples of bricks, mortar mix and colour of the powder coated louvers;
- A programme of archaeological excavation to be submitted.

Reason for recommendation

The recommendation has been made with regard to the provisions of the development plan, so far as material to the application including policies WM6, ENV6 and ENV7 of the adopted East of England Plan (May 2008), saved policies HBE3, HBE8, HBE12 and EP22 of the City of Norwich Replacement Local Plan (November 2004), PPS1, Supplement to PPS1,

PPG15, PPG16, PPG24 and other material considerations. On balance it is considered that the proposals are acceptable and subject to the conditions listed the proposals would not have any significant detrimental impact on neighbour amenity, the appearance of the conservation area or the setting of any Listed Building.



© Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Licence No. 100019747 2009

Planning Application No- 09/00282/F

Site Address - Monastery Court, Elm Hill, Norwich

Scale - 1:1000



NORWICH
City Council

DIRECTORATE OF REGENERATION
AND DEVELOPMENT

