

**Report to** Planning Applications Committee

**Report of** Head of Planning & Regulatory Services

**Subject** Applications 23/00271/F and 23/00272/L - 30 Bethel Street, Norwich, NR2 1NR

**Reason for referral** Objections

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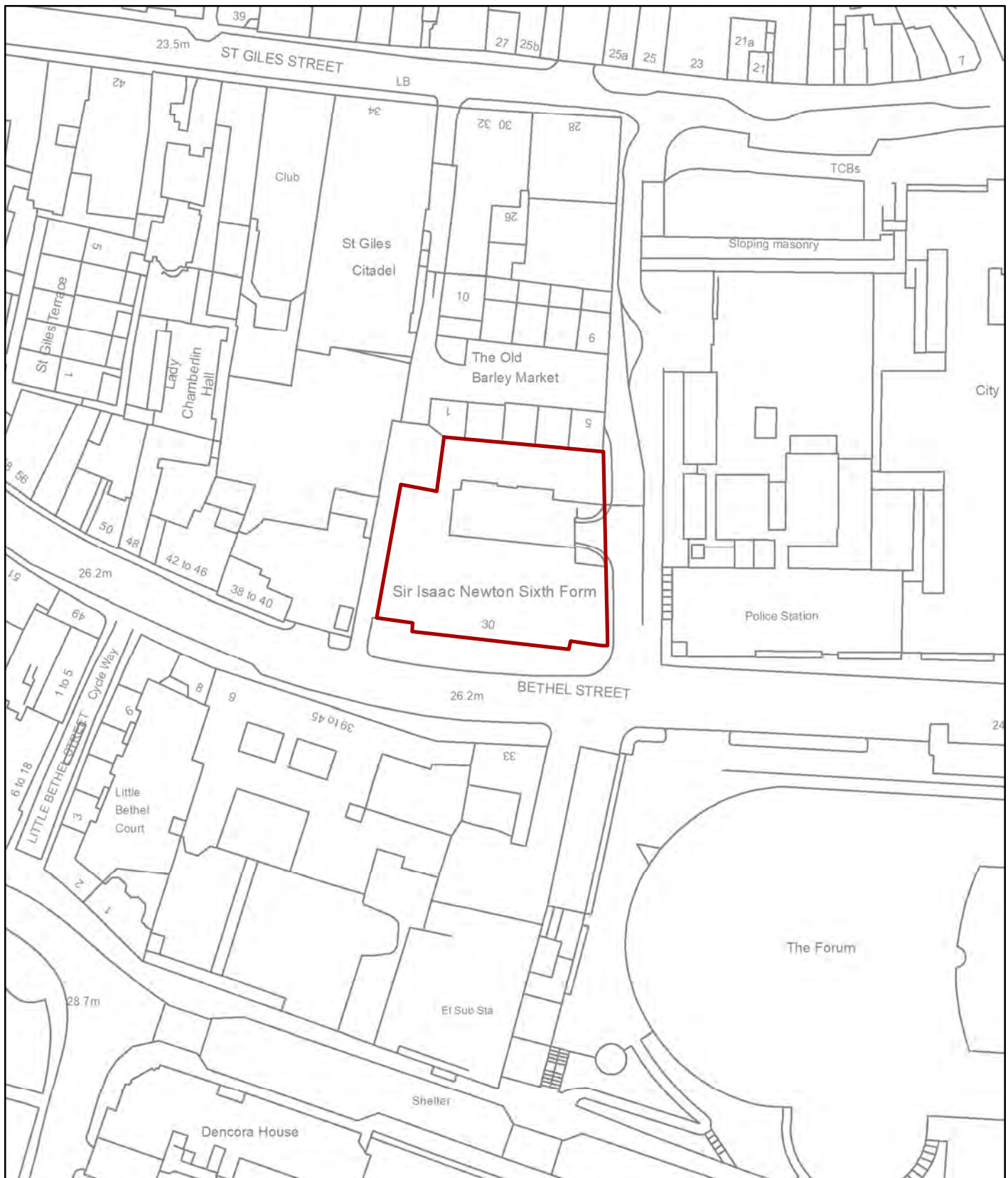
Item

5a

<b>Ward</b>	Mancroft
<b>Case officer</b>	Nyasha Dzwowa - <a href="mailto:nyashadzwowa@norwich.gov.uk">nyashadzwowa@norwich.gov.uk</a>
<b>Applicant</b>	Inspiration Trust

<b>Development proposal-</b> 23/00271/F and 23/00272/L		
Installation of 2no. air conditioning units at roof level.		
<b>Representations</b>		
Object	Comment	Support
2	0	0

<b>Main issues</b>	<b>Key considerations</b>
1	Design and Heritage
2	Amenity
<b>Expiry date</b>	16 June 2023
<b>Recommendation</b>	Approve



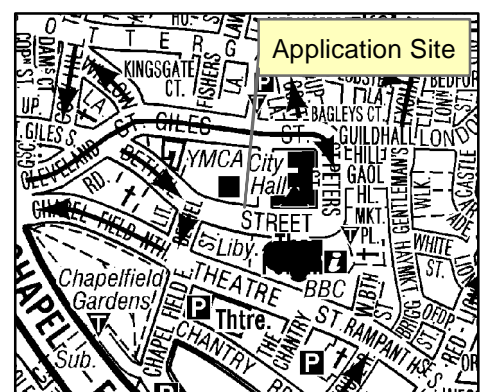
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Planning Application No 23/00271/F & 23/00272/L  
Site Address 30 Bethel Street

Scale 1:1,000



**NORWICH**  
City Council  
PLANNING SERVICES



## The site and surroundings

1. The subject site is located north of Bethel Street within the Civic Character Area of the City Centre Conservation Area. The building was formerly used as a fire station and is now in use as Sir Isaac Newton Sixth Form.
2. The site is surrounded by listed buildings to the west, south and east, creating group value with the grade II\* Listed City Hall and Police Station which were all constructed in the 1930s. To the north of the site there is residential dwellings in The Old Barley Market and some residential properties are also located south of the site on the opposite side of Bethel Street.
3. The subject building is Grade II listed and the list describes it as follows:

Fire Station of 1932-34, by Stanley G Livock.

### MATERIALS

The station is constructed of red brick with Portland stone dressings, built on a concrete frame, with a tiled, hipped roof.

### PLAN

The plan comprises a three storey front range incorporating vehicular access on ground floor, with leisure rooms and crew accommodation above and staircases and pole access at each end. Family accommodation is in the three and four storey western range, at right-angles to the front block and office accommodation and entrance to the drill yard at the east elevation. Further garaging and a practice and hose drying tower are at the rear, adjoining the former Weights and Measures Office.

### EXTERIOR

The facade has eight, double-height, square panelled doors framed by stone pilasters supporting an entablature with the words 'FIRE STATION' affixed. Pedestrian access is through similarly designed doors at the west and east ends. That to the west has a simple moulded stone surround, but the east door has a square fanlight above with curvilinear glazing bars, and stone pilaster architrave. Centrally positioned above each vehicle door is a 28-light Crittall window with a square brick head, and above each pedestrian door, there is a window opening with ogee-shaped head, moulded stone surround and balcony with cast-iron balustrade. On the second floor, there are fourteen smaller 16-light Crittall windows. Centrally placed is a stone plaque with the City coat of arms and date 1934, supporting a flag pole. Both the west and east elevations have similar arrangements of fenestration; the east block is shorter to allow access to the drill yard framed by curving enclosure walls culminating in brick and stone piers adorned by 1930s lanterns. At the rear of the front block, vehicle doors lead to the drill yard on the ground floor where a later C20 partial covering has been erected. Additional garaging is accommodated at the ground floor of the western block and in the practice tower block to the rear. The latter, integrated into the former Weights and Measures office, incorporates the four storey slightly projecting practice and hose drying tower styled as a campanile, with a deeply recessed entrance door with moulded stone surround and recessed window openings with square heads at each storey until the fourth which has an arched brick head. Above, a dentil cornice and louvred openings on each side are topped by a pyramidal roof supporting a weather vane depicting a fire engine, perhaps a unique feature. Throughout, all windows appear

to have the original Crittall frames and the 1930s rainwater goods remain.

## INTERIOR

There is a remarkable of original fixtures and fittings in all blocks with the exception of the former Weights and Measures office which was not part of the original station and does not contain any contemporary fittings apart from the staircase. The original doors and window furniture largely remain throughout. In the front block, the vehicle door fittings survive, as does the tiled wall surrounds in the vehicle bay, original poles and staircases. Only the two flights and the balustrade of the east staircase have been replaced. The first floor former library and snooker room have original wooden panelling. The crew rooms on the second floor largely have original basins and radiators. In the western block, individual flats for the station officers are arranged off each landing, with identical layout of rooms and most with their original simple cornices and fireplaces with tiled surrounds.

## HISTORY

From the mid C19 onwards, Fire Stations began to appear all over the country, usually following the formation of a local brigade by the Police, insurance companies and local individuals. In the later C19, the Norwich municipal fire engine was kept beneath the Sheriff's office at the Guildhall, relocating to larger premises in Pottergate in 1899. Changing requirements prompted the need for additional facilities and the Bethel Street Fire Station was designed as a key building in the visionary new Civic Centre at the heart of the City, conceived during the 1920s. The layout of the centre was designed to integrate with the historic buildings of Norwich and is described by Pevsner as 'one of the best examples of municipal town planning in England.'

City Hall (James and Pierce, 1937-38) was intended to be the first of the buildings constructed, but in the event the Fire Station, by Norwich architect Stanley Livock, was built first in 1932-34. Photographic evidence of the Fire Station when it was being constructed, and after it was first opened, confirms that the building is little altered.

## SOURCES

Pevsner, N 'Norfolk 1 Norwich and the North-east' 1962, revised 1997, p. 163  
City of Norwich Corporation, 'City of Norwich Plan' 1945

## REASONS FOR DESIGNATION DECISION

The Bethel Street Fire Station is designated for listing in grade II for the following principal reasons.

\*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 II-\* listed City Hall and Police Station, and is a key building in the Civic complex in the historic Norwich city centre.

LISTING NGR: TG2277308481

## Constraints

4. City Centre Conservation Area  
Grade II Listed  
City Centre Leisure Area  
Area of Main Archaeological Interest  
Areas for Increased Parking  
City Centre Parking Area

## Relevant planning history

5. The records held by the city council show an extensive planning history, with the following being recent or relevant to this proposal.

Ref	Proposal	Decision	Date
22/00402/F	Installation of roof top air conditioning unit and associated pipework.	APPR	15/06/2022
22/00404/L	Relocation of 2 No. timber stud walls, reconfiguration of lighting and flooring and installation of air conditioning unit and associated pipework.	APPR	15/06/2022
22/01334/F	Installation of an electric vehicle charging point and relocating the cycle storage. (Retrospective)	APPR	17/03/2023
22/01336/L	Installation of an electric vehicle charging point and relocating the cycle storage. (Retrospective)	APPR	17/03/2023

## The proposal

6. Two applications are brought before the committee. The first application is for full planning permission (23/00271/F) and the second is for listed building consent (23/00272/L).
7. Both applications seek to install 2 air conditioning units on the north wing of the building. The units will be installed 7.7m away from the edge of the roof closest to Old Barley Market on the northern building. The units will allow for better thermal comfort for staff and students in two classrooms on the ground floor.

## Representations

8. Adjacent and neighbouring properties have been notified in writing. 2 letters of representation have been received citing the issues as summarised in the table below.

Issues raised	Response
The additional units will generate noise and pollution which will affect residents of The Old Barley Market	See main issue 2

## Consultation responses

9. Consultation responses are summarised below the full responses are available to view at <http://planning.norwich.gov.uk/online-applications/> by entering the application number.

## Design and conservation

10. A Conservation and Design Officer was consulted and they have no objection to the proposed.
11. The Officers assessment concluded that “The air-con units will have less than substantial harm on the listed building and character and appearance of the conservation area, but still a level of harm at the lower end of the scale.”
12. However, the following conditions were recommended;
- a) To screen the units or set them further back.
  - b) Details and sample of the finish of the units to be submitted for assessment.
  - c) Details of service routes to be submitted for assessment.

## Environmental protection

13. The Adrian James Noise Report ref 13521 Report 1.docx dated 27<sup>th</sup> January 2023 finds that the noise from the air conditioning units would not have a negative impact on the closest receptors provided the units are only run during the opening hours of the college and not run at night. I have no objections to the installation of these units but would like to condition the operating hours to 8am till 5pm.

## Assessment of planning considerations

### Relevant development plan policies

14. **Joint Core Strategy for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk adopted March 2011 amendments adopted Jan. 2014 (JCS)**
- JCS1 Addressing climate change and protecting environmental assets
  - JCS2 Promoting good design
15. **Norwich Development Management Policies Local Plan adopted Dec. 2014 (DM Plan)**
- DM1 Achieving and delivering sustainable development
  - DM2 Ensuring satisfactory living and working conditions
  - DM3 Delivering high quality design
  - DM9 Safeguarding Norwich’s heritage
  - DM11 Protecting against environmental hazards

### Other material considerations

16. **Relevant sections of the National Planning Policy Framework July 2021 (NPPF):**
- NPPF12 Achieving well-designed places
  - NPPF16 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

## Case Assessment

17. Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Relevant development plan policies are detailed above. Material considerations include policies in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the Council's standing duties, other policy documents and guidance detailed above and any other matters referred to specifically in the assessment below. The following paragraphs provide an assessment of the main planning issues in this case against relevant policies and material considerations.

### Main issue 1: Design & Heritage

18. Key policies and NPPF paragraphs – JCS2, DM3, DM9, NPPF paragraphs 126-136 & 189-208
19. Sections 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 place a statutory duty on the local authority to have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings or their setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess and to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas. Case law (specifically *Barnwell Manor Wind Energy Ltd v East Northamptonshire DC* [2014]) has held that this means that considerable importance and weight must be given to the desirability of preserving the setting of listed buildings and conservation areas when carrying out the balancing exercise.
20. The proposed air conditioning units will be mounted on the roof of the northern building on the site, this will be an addition to the existing equipment on the roof. The new units will be the tallest equipment on the roof of the northern wing of the site. The units would be partially visible from the street level on Ingham Street and within the boundary of the property, therefore impact on the wider area is minimal. There is no visibility from Bethel Street which is the principal elevation.
21. In response to the Conservation Officers comments, the recommendation to screen the units to mitigate the impact on the heritage asset is acknowledged however this is not considered to be necessary as other equipment on the site can be partially seen from Ingham Street. Further, visibility is from a side elevation which has less historic significance therefore, the harm is considered to be have been minimised. Within the surrounding area it is common to have partial visibility of equipment on the roof, therefore, screening is not considered to be necessary. The Officer also recommended setting the units further back from the edge, this is not possible as the recommendation in the Noise Impact Assessment is for the units to be positioned at least 6m away from the residential properties. Therefore, repositioning the units would increase noise for residents. It is considered that the harm to the character and significance of the listed building and the surrounding conservation area is less than substantial. The proposed units are small scale equipment and they will not significantly impact the design and character of the building or its surrounding.
22. The recommendation to attach a condition regarding the material and colour of the units has been considered and it is concluded that this is not necessary as the

specification provided clearly shows the appearance of the units. Furthermore, the proposed units are the same as the existing air conditioning unit on the southern part of the building, which was approved in 2022.

23. Sufficient information has been submitted to show that the units can be serviced without causing significant harm to the physical fabric of the building. Internally the building is modern with few features of historic significance. However, it is considered necessary to condition that full service route details are submitted for further assessment to avoid unnecessary harm to historic fabric.
24. The less than substantial harm identified is considered to be outweighed by the public benefit of providing a comfortable learning and working environment for students and staff and by modernising the building's facilities in order that it may continue to be occupied and maintained. The proposal therefore satisfies paragraph 202 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

### **Main issue 2: Amenity**

25. Key policies and NPPF paragraphs – DM2, DM11, NPPF paragraphs 8 and 127.
26. In the objections concerns were raised regarding the proposed units causing disturbance to the residents of The Old Barley Market by noise generated by the proposed units. Objections also expressed concerns regarding pollution from the proposed units.
27. The proposed units are air conditioners and will not emit any form of pollution from the classrooms they serve.
28. The units will be positioned on the roof of the northern building and will be set back from the frontage of the building by 0.66m and also be positioned 7.7m away from the roof edge closest to the nearest receptors at The Old Barley Market.
29. The proposed units would only be used during the hot summer months and would only operate during daytime hours. The units would not have an adverse impact on nearby residential dwellings as the plant sound rating level will be at least 2dB below the background noise level during the day.
30. The Council's Environmental Protection Officer was satisfied with the findings of the Noise Impact Assessment which concluded that the units will not have an adverse impact on nearby residential dwellings however a condition limiting the hours of operation has been recommended in order to reduce the cumulative impact of the additional units. Furthermore, it is recommended to add a condition for the units to be installed using anti-vibration mountings to further reduce the impact on amenity.

### **Other matters**

31. **Assessment of Impacts under the Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)**

Site Affected: (a) Broads SAC/Broadland Ramsar

(b) River Wensum SAC

Potential effect: (a) Increased nitrogen and phosphorus loading



(b) Increased phosphorous loading

The application represents a 'proposal or project' under the above regulations. Before deciding whether approval can be granted, the council as a competent authority must undertake an appropriate assessment to determine whether or not the proposal is likely, either on its own or in combination with other projects, to have any likely significant effects upon the Broads SAC, and if so, whether or not those effects can be mitigated against.

The Council's assessment is set out below and is based on advice contained in the letter from Natural England to LPA Chief Executives and Heads of Planning dated 16 March 2022.

Broads SAC/Broadland Ramsar.

Does the plan or project create a source of water pollution or have an impact on water quality (e.g. alters dilution)? AND

Is the plan or project within the hydrological catchment of a habitats site which includes interest features that are sensitive to the water quality impacts from the plan or project?

Answer:NO

The answer to this question is based on the NE advice that development not including overnight accommodation generally does not need to be included in an assessment.

Conclusion: It is not necessary to carry out an assessment under the Habitats regs.

River Wensum SAC

Does the plan or project create a source of water pollution or have an impact on water quality (e.g. alters dilution)? AND

Is the plan or project within the hydrological catchment of a habitats site which includes interest features that are sensitive to the water quality impacts from the plan or project?

Answer:NO

The answer to this question is based on the NE advice that development not including overnight accommodation generally does not need to be included in an assessment. In addition, the discharge for WwTW is downstream of the SAC.

Conclusion: It is not necessary to carry out an assessment under the Habitats regs.

## **Equalities and diversity issues**

32. There are no equality or diversity issues.

## **Local finance considerations**

33. Under Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 the council is required when determining planning applications to have regard to any local finance considerations, so far as material to the application. Local finance considerations are defined as a government grant or the Community Infrastructure Levy. Whether or not a local finance consideration is material to a particular decision will depend on whether it could help to make the development acceptable in planning terms. It would not be appropriate to make a decision on the potential for the development to raise money for a local authority. In this case local finance considerations are not considered to be material to the case.

## **Conclusion**

34. The proposed units will have a minimal impact on the amenity of nearby residential properties and will have less than substantial harm on the Grade II Listed Building and the surrounding Conservation Area. The development is in accordance with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework and the Development Plan, and it has been concluded that there are no material considerations that indicate it should be determined otherwise.

## **Recommendation**

(1) To approve application 23/00271/F at 30 Bethel Street, Norwich NR2 1NR and grant planning permission subject to the following conditions:

1. Standard time limit;
2. In accordance with plans;
3. Hours of operation;
4. Anti-vibration mountings;

(2) To approve application 23/00272/L at 30 Bethel Street, Norwich NR2 1NR and grant listed building consent subject to the following conditions:

1. Standard time limit;
2. In accordance with plans;
3. Servicing details.

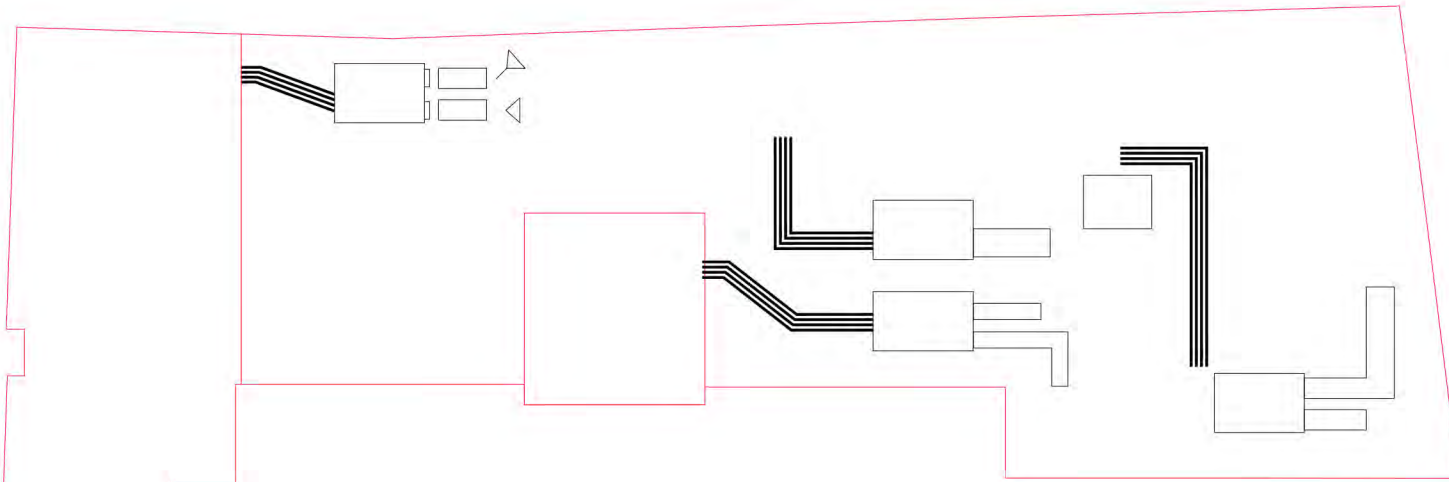
Reason for approval:

The proposed works will have minimal impact on the overall special architectural and historic interest of the Grade II listed building and the Conservation Area. The works are beneficial to the long-term use of the Grade II listed building. The proposal is therefore considered to be in accordance with the objectives of NPPF, Policy 2 of the Adopted Joint Core Strategy (March 2011) and policies DM1, DM3 and DM9 of the Norwich Development Management Policies Local Plan (December 2014).



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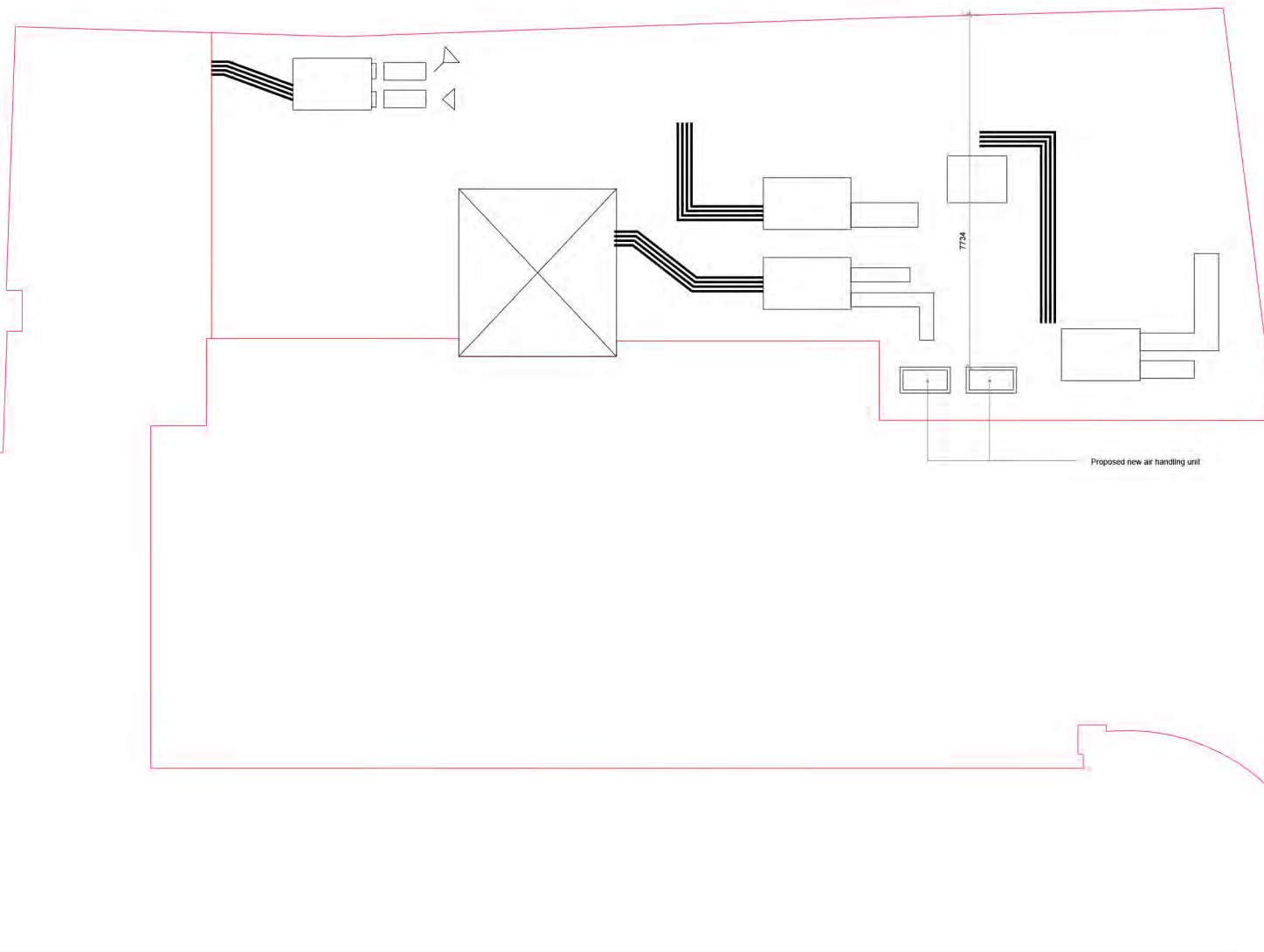
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Sir Isaac Newton Six Form  
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NR2 1NR  
**Client**  
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**Title**  
Roof Plan  
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**Sheet** S2 **Purpose of sheet** Planning **Revision** P01



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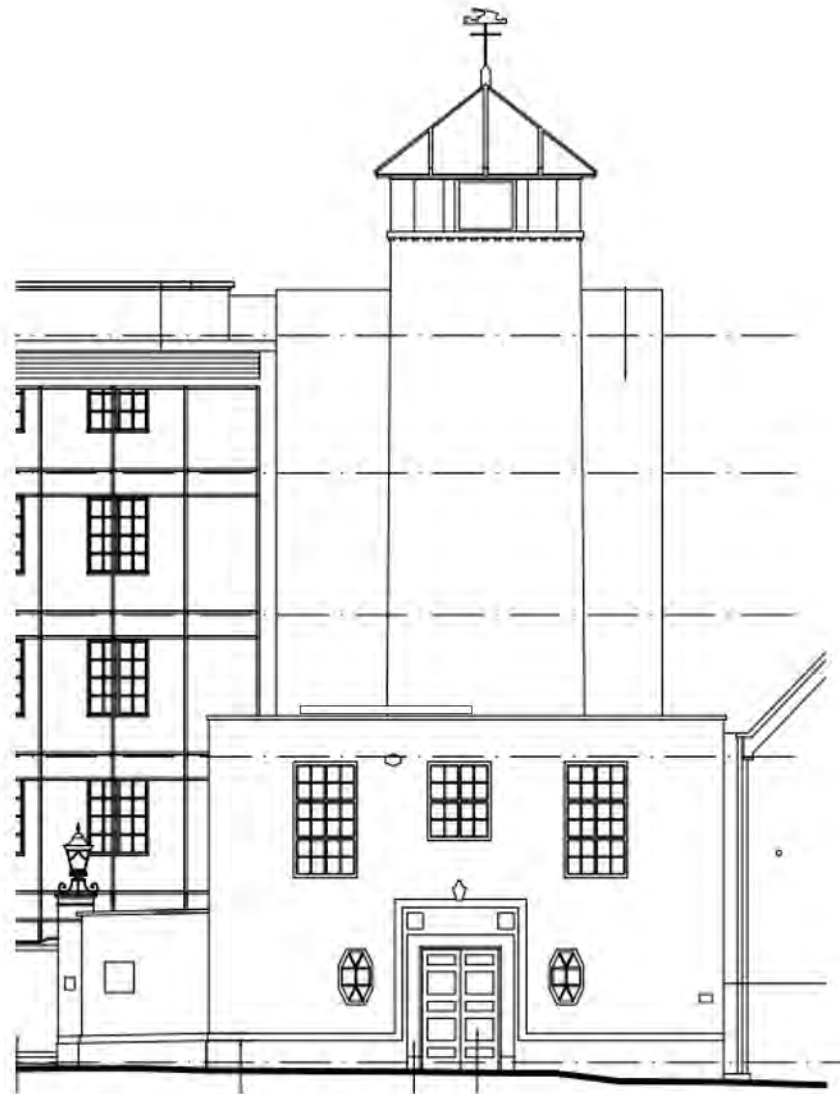
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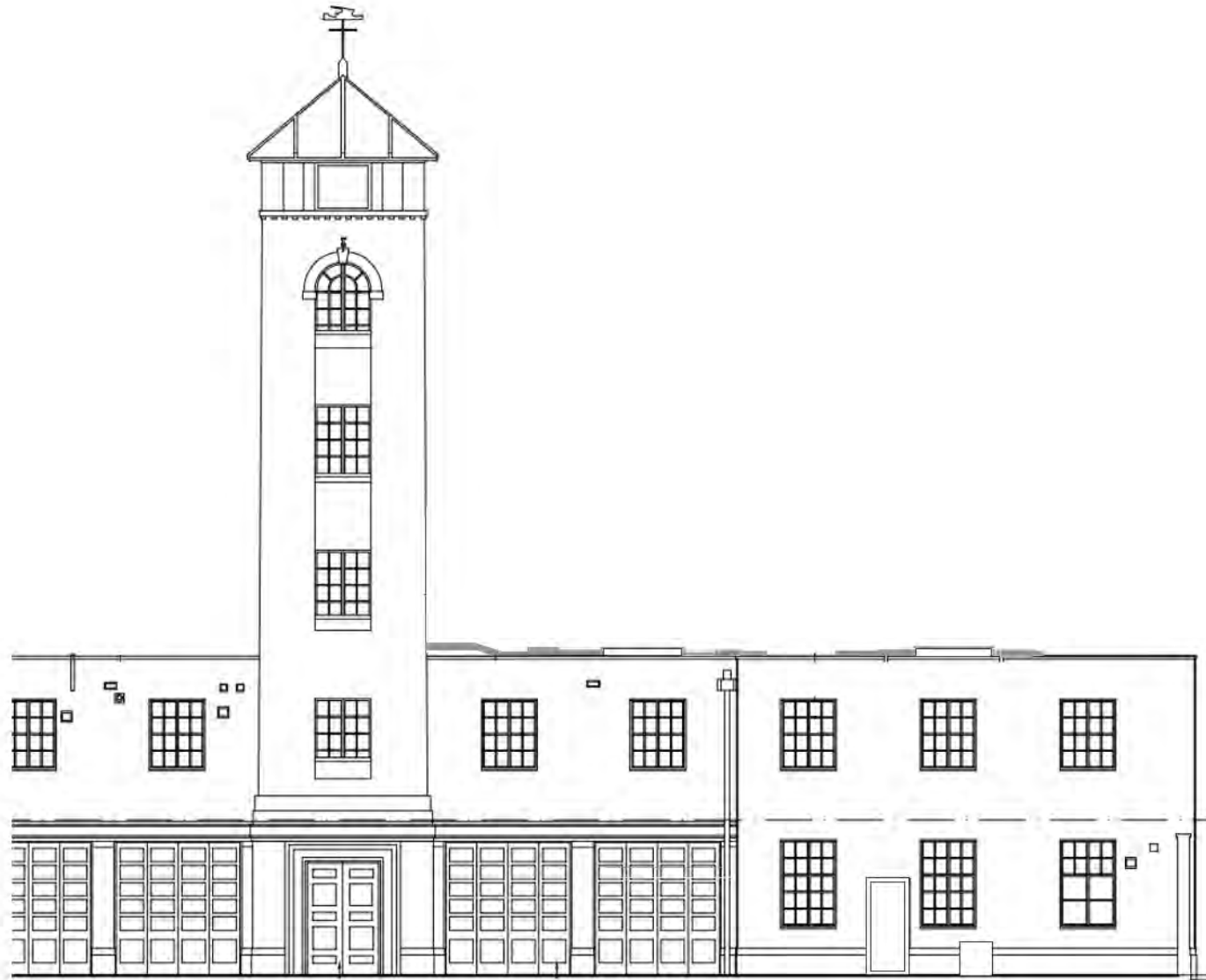
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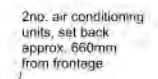


Vision, form and function  
Project  
Listed Building Consent  
Sir Isaac Newton Sixth Form  
Ber Street  
Norwich.

Client  
Sir Isaac Newton Sixth Form

Title  
Existing South Elevation

Project Name	Project No.	Client	Scale
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