

Report to Planning Applications Committee

Item

9 November 2017

Report of Head of Planning Services

Subject

Application no 17/01515/F, Somerley Residential Care Home, Somerleyton Street, Norwich NR2 2BT

4(a)

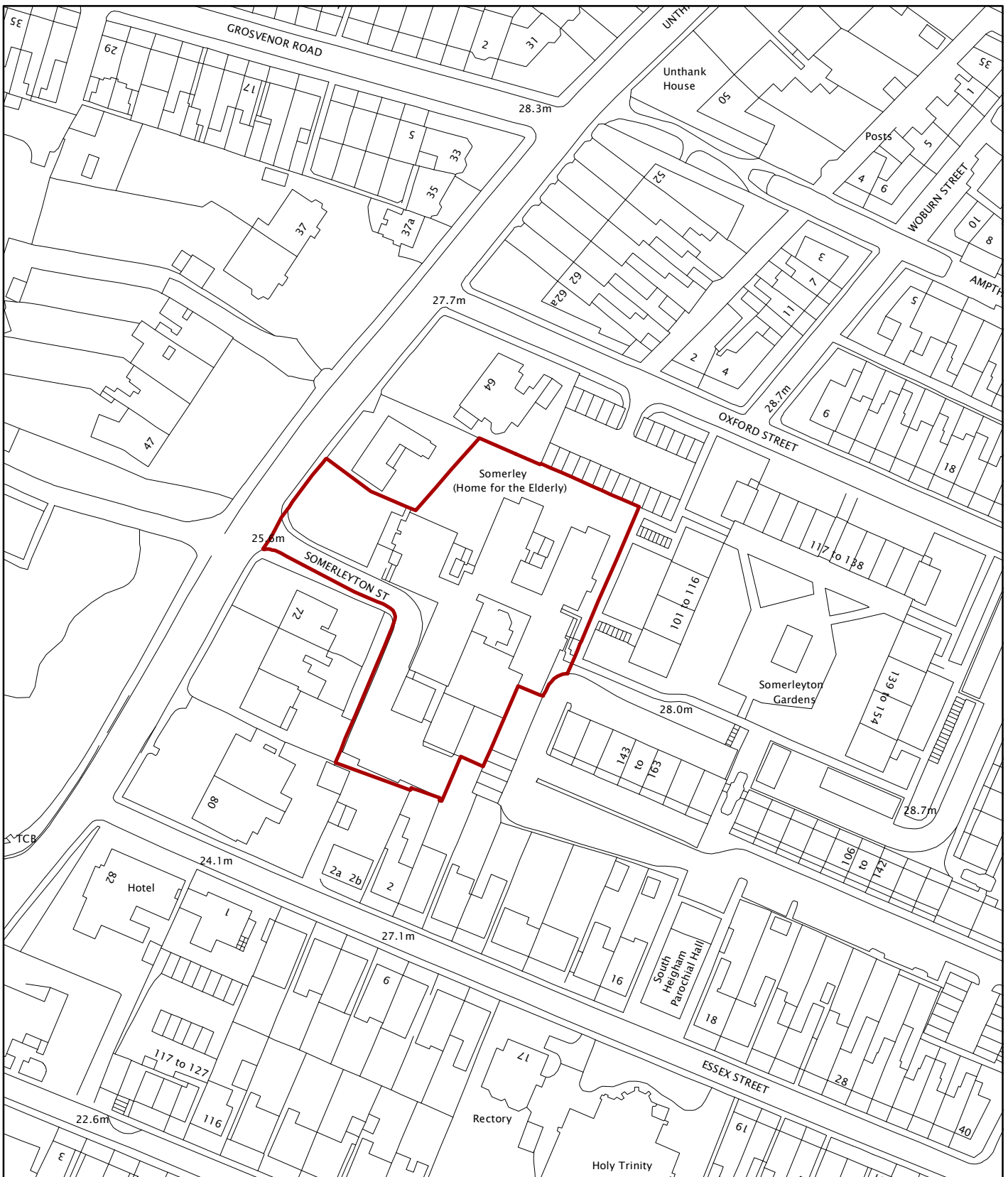
Reason for referral

Objections

Ward	Town Close
Case officer	Lara Emerson - laraemerson@norwich.gov.uk

Development proposal		
Change of use to student accommodation (sui generis).		
Representations		
Object	Comment	Support
6	0	0

Main issues	Key considerations
1. Principle of development	Loss of care home, creation of student accommodation.
2. Amenity	Amenity of neighbours, amenity of future occupants.
3. Transport	Sustainability of location, car parking, cycle parking, refuse storage and collection arrangements, impact on adjacent bus stop.
4. Crime & security	Protection of future residents from crime.
5. Design & heritage	Impact on character and appearance of conservation area.
Expiry date	13 November 2017
Recommendation	Approve



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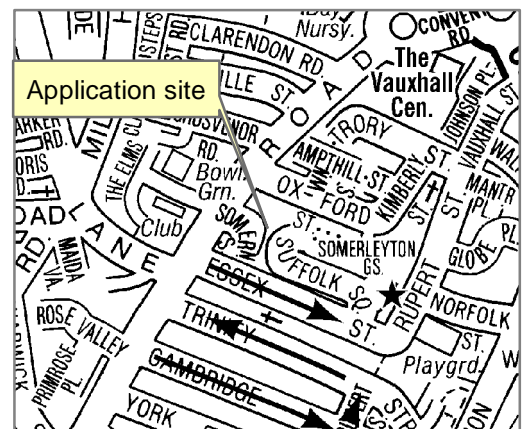
Planning Application No 17/0515/F
 Site Address Somerley Care Home, Unthank Road

Scale 1:1,250



NORWICH
City Council

PLANNING SERVICES



The site, surroundings & constraints

1. The property is a one and two storey recently vacated care home located on Somerleyton Street to the west of the city. The site sits between Unthank Road and the 4 & 5 storey blocks of flats at Suffolk Square. To the south of the site there are properties on Essex Street, and to the north is a newly consented development of 5 terraced dwellings which is currently under construction on Oxford Street.
2. The site is partly within and adjacent to the Heigham Grove Conservation Area. Adjacent properties along Unthank Road and Essex Street are locally listed buildings, and there is a Grade II listed terrace on the opposite side of Unthank Road.
3. The tree adjacent to the entrance within the grounds of 72 Unthank Road is subject to a Tree Preservation Order and there is an area of green space populated by a number of trees on the site's Unthank Road frontage.
4. The site is located in a critical drainage catchment.

Relevant planning history

5. No recent planning history.

Ref	Proposal	Decision	Date
4/1989/0740	Change of use to office accommodation.	Approved	23/08/1989
4/1993/0712	Use of bungalow as day care centre.	Approved	19/10/1993

The proposal

6. The proposal is for the change of use of the care home to student accommodation.
7. The main building is H-shaped and there is a small separate building currently in use as a caretaker's bungalow. The internal layout would remain largely unchanged with clusters of student bedrooms sharing kitchens and communal rooms. Some bedrooms are proposed to have an en-suite bathroom and some are proposed to share bathrooms. The total number of single bedrooms is 66.
8. There are only minor changes proposed to the outside of the building with some windows and doors being changed or removed.
9. The site is generously sized and the proposal includes the provision of outside space which would be available to residents.
10. The existing car park is proposed to accommodate 2 car parking spaces, storage for 20 bicycles and an area for refuse storage. An additional space at the front of the property will provide a further 20 bicycle storage spaces.

Representations

11. Advertised on site and in the press. 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. All representations are available to view

in full at <http://planning.norwich.gov.uk/online-applications/> by entering the application number.

Issues raised	Response
Noise from students	See main issue 2 relating to amenity.
Parking for residents and visitors	See main issue 3 relating to transport.
Loss of valuable care home facility	See main issue 1 relating to the principle of development.
High crime in the Suffolk Square area - not suitable for students	See main issue 4 relating to crime & security.
Intense use of the site	See main issue 2 relating to amenity.
Litter from students	See main issue 2 relating to amenity.
Already too many students in the area	See conclusion.
Increase in visiting cars causing traffic jams, poor air quality and noise	See main issue 3 relating to transport.
Density & type of development is out of character with the area	See main issue 2 relating to amenity.
Lack of detail regarding external amenity space	See main issue 2 relating to amenity.
Lack of detail regarding disabled access	The existing property has excellent disabled access due to its previous use as a care home.
Lack of detail regarding management of the site	See main issue 2 relating to amenity.
Disagreement over ownership of wall	This is private issue between landowners. No works are proposed to the boundary walls.
Students are more mobile than previous elderly residents	See main issue 3 relating to transport.
Poor living accommodation for future student residents	See main issue 2 relating to amenity.
Loss of green space due to cycle shelter	
Use of outdoor spaces for partying	See main issue 2 relating to amenity.
There should be a restriction on the times of day that the outside space can be used	See main issue 2 relating to amenity.
Increase in number of people using the bus stop - pavement should be widened	See main issue 3 relating to transport.
Limited space for the turning of refuse vehicles on the site	See main issue 3 relating to transport.
Rubbish and recycling are often poorly separated in accommodation such as this	This is not a planning consideration.
Site should be properly lit and secured to prevent crime	See main issue 4 relating to crime & security.

Consultation responses

12. 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

13. This is not an application that I intend to provide conservation and design officer comments on because it does not appear on the basis of the application description to require our specialist conservation and design expertise. This should not be interpreted as a judgement about the acceptability or otherwise of the proposal.

Highways (local)

14. No objection.
15. Recommend that the area at the front of the site is treated with hardstanding to extend the area around the bus stop.
16. Recommend that Somerleyton Street is better demarcated to signify where the public highway ends and the private road begins.
17. Recommend that the applicant considers how refuse collections can take place. The site is not large enough for a normal sized refuse truck to turn around, and reversing onto Unthank Road would cause significant highway safety risk and disruption.

Citywide Services

18. If the council's refuse truck is to be used for waste collections there would need to be a turning head created to make space for the truck to turn around on the site. Reversing onto Unthank Road would not be ideal. Alternatively the bins could be presented on Unthank Road on collection day.

Landscape

19. A comprehensive review of the outdoor space is fully justified. Communal meeting/garden areas should be incorporated. These can be simple in design but will allow residents to access and use the outside space. The development will result in the external courtyard areas being upgraded to provide for landscaped recreational spaces for the residents. These works will provide for opportunities to create new habitats and therefore provide a net biodiversity gain through the development.
20. I agree that the bare earth bank by the bus stop will be more heavily used by pedestrians as a result of this proposal, and this should be protected. A plastic grid can be used and over seeded and this will provide an all-weather surface whilst minimising any damage to the adjacent trees.

Norfolk Constabulary Architectural Liaison

21. Students are particularly vulnerable as they often have high value IT equipment, which in turn makes their residencies appealing to criminals. If the correct security measures are put in place during the refurbishment it makes for a safer environment and a more desirable area for students to want to live.
22. There are a number of detailed considerations and two areas of concern around windows and access control. If certain measures (set out within the formal consultation comments) are not undertaken by the applicant, Norfolk Constabulary would object to the proposals.

Relevant development plan policies

23. **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
 - JCS3 Energy and water
 - JCS6 Access and transportation
24. **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
 - DM6 Protecting and enhancing the natural environment
 - DM7 Trees and development
 - DM9 Safeguarding Norwich's heritage
 - DM12 Ensuring well-planned housing development
 - DM13 Communal development and multiple occupation
 - DM15 Safeguarding the city's housing stock
 - DM22 Planning for and safeguarding community facilities
 - DM28 Encouraging sustainable travel
 - DM30 Access and highway safety
 - DM31 Car parking and servicing

Other material considerations

25. **Relevant sections of the National Planning Policy Framework March 2012 (NPPF)**
 - NPPF0 Achieving sustainable development
 - NPPF4 Promoting sustainable transport
 - NPPF6 Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes
 - NPPF7 Requiring good design
 - NPPF8 Promoting healthy communities
 - NPPF12 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Case Assessment

26. 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: Principle of development

27. Key policies and NPPF paragraphs - DM12, DM13, DM15, JCS7, NPPF paragraphs 7, 9, 17, 34, 49-51 & 70.
28. The proposal involves the change of use of the building from care home to student accommodation. For context, it is understood that the care home was considered surplus to County Council's requirements following the construction of the Bowthorpe Care Village.
29. Since the existing and proposed uses are both residential in nature and there are no policies which specifically protect care homes, the proposal accords with local and national policies which seek to avoid the loss of residential uses.
30. The proposal has been assessed against the criteria set out within DM12 and DM13 which relate to communal and residential development. Subject to the detailed considerations discussed below, the proposal is deemed to comply with each of these criteria.

Main issue 2: Amenity

31. Key policies and NPPF paragraphs - DM2, DM11, DM12, DM13, NPPF paragraphs 9 & 17.
32. The first issue to consider is the impact of the proposed change of use on the amenity of neighbouring occupants. Since the only external works proposed to the building are minor changes to ground floor windows and doors, the proposals will not cause any overshadowing, overlooking or loss of outlook.
33. Many of the objectors to the scheme have raised concerns about noise, disturbance and anti-social behaviour. The number of student residents proposed is 66. There are no conditions restricting the number of residents of the care home but it is acknowledged that, on closing, it provided accommodation for 40 elderly residents. This number is likely to have reduced over time as space requirements within care homes increased. As such, the change of use of the site is not considered to cause any significant intensification of the site in terms of the number of residents.
34. In addition, a number of measures are proposed by the applicant to reduce the potential for anti-social or noisy behaviour from future residents. The premises will be managed 24 hours a day and the routes through to Suffolk Square will be closed so that the only entrance and exit will be via Unthank Road. This will prevent through-traffic and it will encourage residents to gather within the site's grounds rather than on Suffolk Square. The applicant is also willing to provide neighbours with contact details for the managers of the site should there be any complaints in future. Further details about the management of the site will be requested by condition.

35. Some objectors have raised concerns about noise from traffic. As discussed in further detail in the transport section, below, the number of traffic movements to result from the development is likely to be minimal since there are a limited number of parking spaces on site. It is not expected that there will be any increase in noise from traffic since traffic movements to and from the site are likely to be similar to those resulting from the current care home use.
36. The second issue to consider is the provision of sufficient living accommodation for future occupants. The building is well-suited for conversion to student accommodation. Bedrooms are of an acceptable size and there is a sufficient amount of communal space for students. The site is large enough to provide residents with a number of courtyards and open spaces. No detail has been given at this stage about the landscaping of these spaces so a landscaping condition has been recommended.

Main issue 3: Transport

37. Key policies and NPPF paragraphs - JCS6, DM28, DM30, DM31, NPPF paragraphs 17, 34 & 39.
38. The site is in a sustainable location within walking distance of the city centre and on a major bus route which runs between the train station and the UEA.
39. A number of objections have raised concerns about car parking in the area. Cycle parking and refuse storage is proposed within the existing car park, leaving space for approximately 2 car parking spaces. It is intended that these spaces are used by staff and visitors, and that residents are not allowed to bring cars to site. In any case, there would be no space for the parking of residents' cars, and the streets around the site are restricted by a Controlled Parking Zone. Residents of the student accommodation would not be issued with parking permits. As such, it is considered that the development will not have any significant impact on the parking situation in nearby streets.
40. 40 cycle parking spaces are provided which is considered an appropriate level of provision. 20 of these spaces are to be provided at the rear of the site, and 20 at the front. A small part of the grassed area to the front of the property would be lost as a result, which will have a very minor impact on the visual, biodiversity and drainage qualities of this area. Further details of these cycle storage facilities are required. It would be expected that the cycle parking should be covered, lockable and placed on hardstanding to prevent crime and to encourage use of bikes.
41. There has been some debate about how waste collections will take place at the site. Considering the constraints of the site and the location on a busy section of Unthank Road, transport colleagues do not consider it appropriate for a standard council refuse truck to visit the site for collections. The applicant has agreed that private refuse collection arrangements will be made and that a small refuse truck will visit the site instead. A condition is recommended to agree full details.
42. Immediately outside the site on Unthank Road, there is a bus stop which offers frequent services out of the city towards UEA. It is noted that this bus stop can become very busy at certain times of the day and that pedestrians often have to step into the road or up the site's bank to avoid the crowd around the bus stop. The current situation is dangerous at peak times. The bank is a sloping piece of ground

which has been heavily eroded and has a number of tree routes exposed. This bus stop will inevitably become more heavily used with the arrival of 66 students at the site. As such, it has been suggested to the applicant that better protection is offered to the bare earth bank to prevent further erosion and to provide a useful space for bus-users to stand while waiting for the bus. This should help to create more space on the pavement itself so that passing pedestrians don't have to step into the road. Due to the gradient of the area and the presence of tree roots, the new surface will not be able to be constructed to adoptable standards and so this will remain in the ownership and management of the site. A condition is recommended to agree the details of the ground covering.

Main issue 4: Crime & security

43. Key policies and NPPF paragraphs - DM1, DM3, NPPF paragraphs 58 & 69.
44. As highlighted by the Norfolk Constabulary, students are a high risk group when it comes to being victims of crime. As such, it is imperative that the development includes effective security measures to protect the residents of the site from crime (particularly burglaries). The applicant has proposed the following security measures, further details of which will be requested by condition:
 - a) Providing 24 hour management of the site;
 - b) Erecting CCTV cameras at key points around the site; and
 - c) Restricting use of the two gates leading to Suffolk Square to fire exit only. This will better control access to the site and prevent through-traffic.

Main issue 5: Design & heritage

45. Key policies and NPPF paragraphs - JCS2, DM3, NPPF paragraphs 9, 17, 56 & 60-66.
46. The building itself has no particular architectural or heritage value, but the site sits partly within, and adjacent to, the Heigham Grove Conservation Area.
47. The changes proposed to the outside of the building are very minimal (alterations to a few windows and doors). The works are not considered to impact upon the character and appearance of the conservation area, subject to the use of matching materials.

Equalities and diversity issues

48. There are no significant equality or diversity issues.

Local finance considerations

49. 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.

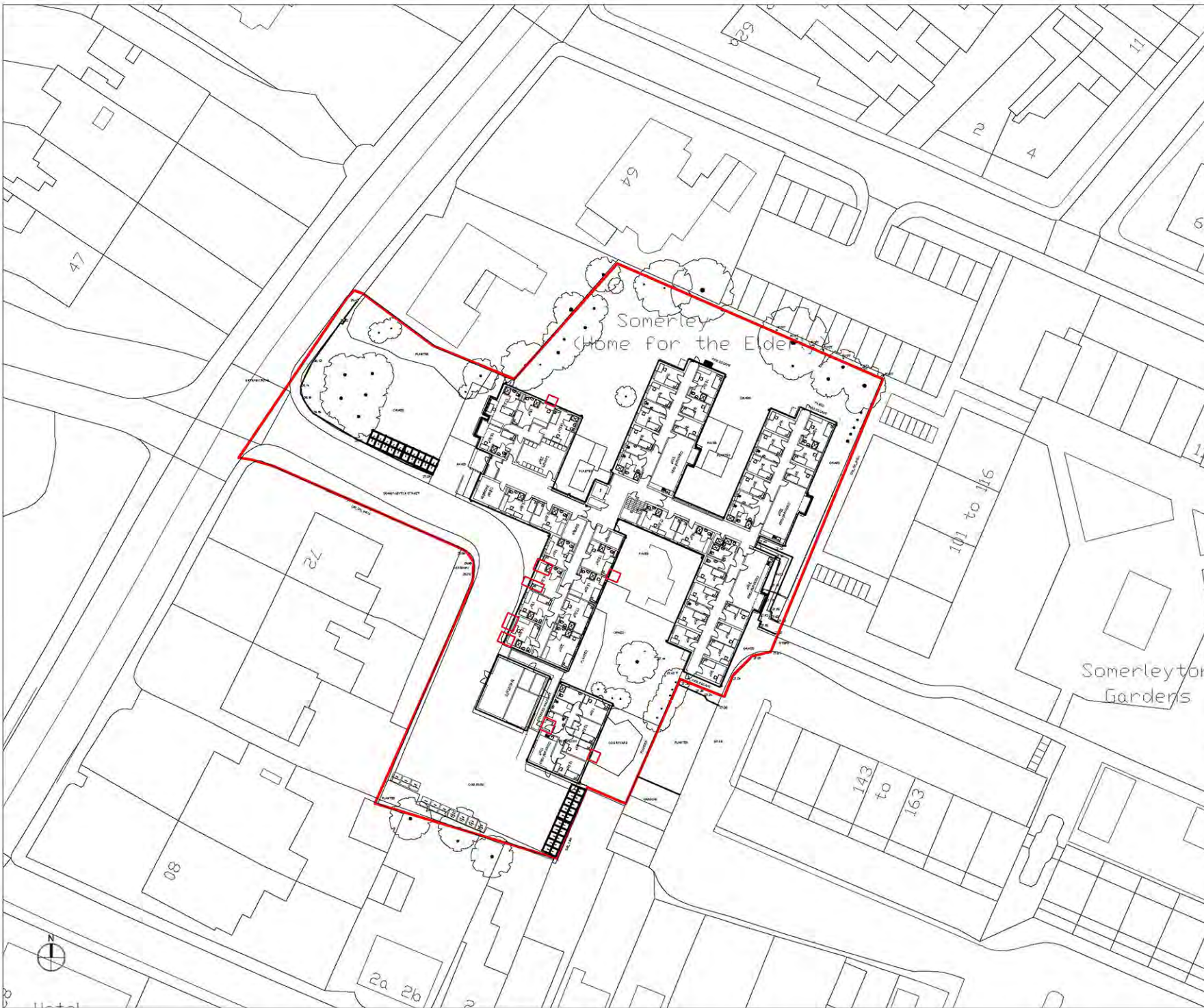
Conclusion

50. It is recognised that the area has a relatively high concentration of student properties due to the proximity to the university. However, it is considered that a properly managed student accommodation block such as this will be a positive addition to the area, not least because it will ease pressure on conversion of C3 dwellings to houses in multiple occupation.
51. The development accords with the relevant policies and subject to the conditions recommended below is considered appropriate for the reasons discussed above. 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

To approve application no. 17/01515/F - Somerley Residential Care Home, Somerleyton Street, Norwich, NR2 2BT and grant planning permission subject to the following conditions:

1. Standard time limit;
2. In accordance with plans;
3. Cycle storage details to be agreed;
4. Management arrangements to be agreed;
5. Refuse arrangements to be agreed;
6. Landscaping scheme to be agreed;
7. Method for protecting the bare earth bank to the front of the site to be agreed;
8. Security measures to be agreed;
9. Matching materials.



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These duties can be found at:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/construction/cdm/2015/responsibilities.htm>

It is your responsibility as client to make yourself aware of your role within CDM 2015 and act accordingly.

— Site Boundary 0.39ha

40 bikes
10 x 1100l bins (6 general waste, 4 recycling)

GIFA: 1675 m²

□ Proposed elevation changes

PURPOSE OF ISSUE PL - For planning	RIBA STAGE 3
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DRAWING STATUS S2 - For information

PROJECT TITLE Somerleyton Student Accommodation
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CLIENT Devukia Properties

DRAWING TITLE Site Plan	SCALE 1 @ 500
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DATE Sept 2015	DRAWN BY RVR	CHECKED BY TU	APPROVED BY IR
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DRAWING NUMBER			
PROJECT NO	TYPE	UNIQUE NO	REVISION
0808A	00	001	-

Lanpro

(Architecture and Urban Design)

Newich Office: Breddingham House, 28 Pottergate, Norwich, NR2 1ED
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- Single Room
- Studio
- Communal Room
- Bathroom

GF+FF
 Single room total: 44
 Studios total: 22
 Total of rooms: 66

PURPOSE OF ISSUE		RIBA STAGE	
FE - For feasibility		1	
DRAWING STATUS			
S2 - For information			
PROJECT TITLE			
Somersley House			
CLIENT			
Devlukia Properties			
DRAWING TITLE		SCALE	
Proposed Ground Floor		1:200	
DATE	DRAWN BY	CHECKED BY	APPROVED BY
Aug 2017	RVR	TU	IR

DRAWING NUMBER			
PROJECT NO	TYPE	UNIQUE NO	REVISION
0000	- 00	- 003	-





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- Single Room
- Studio
- Communal Room
- Bathroom

GF+FF
 Single room total: 44
 Studios total: 22
 Total of rooms: 66

PURPOSE OF ISSUE FE - For feasibility		RIBA STAGE 1	
DRAWING STATUS S2 - For information			
PROJECT TITLE Somerlay House			
CLIENT Devlukia Properties			
DRAWING TITLE Proposed First Floor Plan		SCALE 1:200	
DATE Aug 2017	DRAWN BY RVR	CHECKED BY TU	APPROVED BY IR

DRAWING NUMBER			
PROJECT NO 0808A-	TYPE 00	UNIQUE NO - 004	REVISION -

