**Report for Resolution**

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| **Report to** | Planning Applications Committee | **Item** |
| **Date** | 23 August 2012 | 5(5) |
| **Report of** | Head of Planning Services | |
| **Subject** | 12/01384/L Earlham Hall Earlham Road Norwich NR4 7TJ | |

## SUMMARY

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|---|---|
| **Description:** | Removal of existing window 0.09W3 and relocation within the same room, 0.09, at the same height and directly related to its historic position, as a screen. Removal of brick spandrel panel below the window cill, formation of a new fire resisting door and screen in the extended opening. |
| **Reason for consideration at Committee:** | Objection |
| **Recommendation:** | Refer listed building consent (12/01384/L) to Secretary of State to seek authority to approve application contrary to English Heritage objection |
| **Ward:** | University |
| **Contact Officer:** | Mr Lee Cook Senior Planner 01603 212536 |
| **Valid Date:** | 29th June 2012 |
| **Applicant:** | University of East Anglia |
| **Agent:** | R H Partnership Architects |

# INTRODUCTION

1. The application has been brought to committee to seek approval to refer the above listed building consent application to the Secretary of State to seek authority to approve the application. Other than the English Heritage objection no other letters of representation have been received.

## The Site

### Location, Context and Constraints

2. Earlham Hall is a Grade II* listed building set within a conservation area on Earlham Road to the west of the city. The site is accessed off University Drive, which provides one of two main vehicle access points into the University of East Anglia.

3. Earlham Hall is separated into several distinct character areas which vary in age and in heritage importance. Earlham Hall and adjoining outbuildings including the bothy and north and east courtyards form the core of the Grade II* listed building of Earlham Hall. Further to this there is the walled garden and former nursery site to the east and north east of the Hall, and other formal gardens to the north, west and south of the Hall that form and directly affect the setting of this listed building. There is also a former works depot to the east of the Hall alongside University Drive that is

identified for redevelopment as an enterprise centre. Finally there is a car park to the north east of the Hall that is used by people visiting the wider Earlham Park grounds. The Hall is set within Earlham Park that forms a large area of open space to the north up to Earlham Road and to the south to the edge of the university campus.

4. Earlham Hall itself has been leased to the University of East Anglia since the 1960s whose campus lies directly to south. The Hall is currently vacated however it was home to the University's School of Law. In 2010 the Hall was sold by the City Council to the UEA. The Hall is thought to originally date from C16-C17 but has been modified in several phases of remodelling, including extensive work to the building by Boardman in the early C20.

5. The surrounding parkland forms a historic park and is publicly accessible recreational open space, and contains designated woodland and river valley. The site is also within 100m of a designated gateway to the city under the City of Norwich Replacement Local Plan.

**Planning History**

The main Hall has a long history of alterations which more recently have come to fall under the direct control of the Listed Building and Conservation Areas Act. Major refurbishment works have recently been approved under applications:
**12/00712/F** - Extensions and alterations to include:
1) Removal of more recent extension to east of Hall and construction of new entrance and foyer;
2) Change to landscaping in east courtyard to include access ramp and steps;
3) Removal of external fire escape staircase on west elevation;
4) Removal of part of eastern wall in north courtyard to formation new route through north east area to link north and east courtyards; and
5) Removal of identified features and additions externally from the building and refurbishments; window and door replacement; and works to roofs. (Approved - 27/07/2012); and
**12/00713/L** - Refurbishment works including:
1) Removal of more recent extension to east of Hall and construction of new entrance and foyer on east elevation, and change to landscaping in east courtyard;
2) Formation of new route through north east area to link north and east courtyards and works to the north courtyard;
3) Removal of external fire escape on west elevation;
4) Removal of identified features and additions internally and externally from the building;
5) New WC facilities, services and fittings inside the Hall; and
6) General repairs and redecoration of Hall and buildings to south of the west courtyard. (Approved - 29/06/2012)

Certain elements of work for the scheme were removed from these applications to enable investigation of alternative forms or solutions to carrying out some of the site works. This includes the works to the reception area currently under consideration with the application **12/01384/L** now before Members.

6. Other works are planned under applications **12/01331/F; 12/01347/L; 12/01377/F;**

**12/01379/L; 12/01384/L; 12/01438/D;** and **12/01526/D.** These include works to buildings around the east courtyard and discharge of conditions on earlier application 12/00712/F and 12/00713/L. They also include alternative solutions to fire escape routes through the building and other modifications which as revised have not now received objections.

**Equality and Diversity Issues**

The aim of the east entrance and reception in the area where the window is to be removed is to improve access to the east of the Hall which will form the main visitor entrance and in orientation enable better connection to proposed development in the courtyard and wider area to the east. The building has a number of changes in levels which would make receiving visitors to the site and or visiting the site extremely difficult for those with limited mobility or those who use wheelchairs. This matter is discussed further in the report below.

## The Proposal

7. This part of the scheme is for the removal of existing window 0.09W3 which is adjacent to the new main east entrance as approved under the above full and listed building applications 12/00712/F and 12/00713/L. This will provide entrance to a new reception area adjacent to the main entrance to form a main contact point for persons visiting the building.

8. The window is to be relocated within the same room, 0.09, at the same height and directly related to its historic position, but will act as a screen at the middle of the room. The brick spandrel panel below the window cill will be removed and a new fire resisting door and screen will be formed in the lowered opening.

## Representations Received

9. Advertised on site and in the press. Adjacent and neighbouring properties have been notified in writing. No letters of representation have been received.

## Consultation Responses

10. English Heritage – Object in principle.

11. Norfolk Heritage Environment Services - No archaeological implications.

12. Ancient Monuments Society - No response received

13. Council for British Archaeology - No response received

14. The Garden History Society - No response received

15. The Georgian Group - No response received

16. Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings - No response received

17. The Twentieth Century Society - No response received

18. The Victorian Society - No response received

# ASSESSMENT OF PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

## Relevant Planning Policies

**National Planning Policy Framework:**
Statement 12 - Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

**Relevant policies of the adopted East of England Plan Regional Spatial Strategy 2008**
ENV6 – The historic environment
ENV7 – Quality in the built 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 7 – Supporting communities

**Relevant saved policies of the adopted City of Norwich Replacement Local Plan 2004**
HBE8 – Development in conservation areas
HBE9 – Listed buildings and development affecting them
HBE12 – High quality of design

**Other Material considerations**
Written Ministerial Statement: Planning for Growth March 2011

## Principle of Development

### Policy Considerations

19. The key considerations for assessing the impact on the Grade II* listed building, its setting and the wider conservation area are the loss of historic fabric and impact on the layout of this part of the building. The importance of public access and public benefit are also a consideration.

## Moving existing window and creating new opening

20. The refurbishment of the Hall as the University's School of Law is a major development that will return the building to full use and result in its repair. Planning Officers and English Heritage have been involved in lengthy and detailed pre-application discussions on this project and both support its initiatives. Some alterations to the building will, unfortunately, have a harmful impact, but are necessary to bring it into use.

21. The justification for the window removal is to create a new DDA compliant access and reception to the School of Law and this therefore needs to be viewed within the much wider context of the refurbishment and remodelling of the Hall considered under applications 12/00712/F and 12/00713/L. Those applications have granted consent for extensive remodelling of the east elevation to better reveal areas of significance and provide an enhanced and more legible access to the building from the east courtyard. The east courtyard and surrounding courtyard buildings are also

undergoing extensive renewal and will see increases in use far above what has been the case in recent years. This development is linked into a wider project of developing the setting of the building to the east with the NRP Enterprise Centre and development within the walled garden.

22. English Heritage commented in their response that despite detailed discussions with the project architect they remain unconvinced that the removal of an historic window in room 0.09 is necessary to achieve the aim of bringing the building back into use. They advise that the removal of the window and enlargement of the opening will result in loss of historic fabric and a significant change to the circulation within and appearance of the room, especially as a similar window will remain in place nearby.

23. English Heritage also considers that the architects have produced plans for an alternative method of creating a new entrance to the reception area which would cause some damage, but avoid removal of the window and is therefore more capable of sustaining the significance of the heritage asset and have asked for the application to be refused. They however accept that the Council must weigh up any public benefit from the proposal against the harm.

**Alternative options**

24. The alternatives to the proposed removal of the window and part of the wall have been fully considered.

25. A poorly designed modern external porch has previously been added to the east side of the building and reinforced concrete stair installed which reconfigured the arrangement within this part of the building and obscured the window under consideration with the current application. Other parts of historic fabric where also obscured by these late 20$^{th}$C alterations. Under the recent planning and listed building applications for the refurbishment of the Hall these alterations have been agreed to be removed to provide an improved entrance point and the reversal of some impacts within this part of the Hall. The new entrance is designed as a new distinct addition which will be interpreted as a modern 21$^{st}$C phase of fairly extensive alteration and a new phase in its history to bring the building back into use as the Law School for the University of East Anglia.

26. The reception area has formed a part of building assessment within this area. The alternatives to access to room 0.09 which have been investigated include creating a new door opening directly next to the window and as an alternative creating an opening further to the west of this space within an existing partial reveal which is visible from the corridor next to room 0.09.

27. Consideration has been given to these options but each will still have significant impact on the fabric of the building. Whilst the window remains in-situ the wall will need opening up to form a new door opening. This in turn will involve the reinforcing of the new floor to the entrance area, potential loss of remains of another historic opening and removal of the historic barrel vault which is retained in the corner of this entrance space. Neither alternative will allow wheelchair access to the reception area space.

**Impact on the significance of the heritage asset**

28. The understanding of the building has been explored in Tom Williamson (2010) “Earlham Hall and its Landscape” and Norwich Heart (2009) “Earlham Hall and its context”, however it is noted that there has been no comprehensive conservation

plan covering the property. R H Partnership have however further explored the building establishing areas of significance, produced a useful 3d modelling of the phasing of the Hall and set outline conservation and management policies for its refurbishment under the current building project.

29. The proposals concern the removal of one of the earliest C17 windows in the building and a feature of considerable significance. Such an alteration, in line with the architect's own policies set out in the heritage statement, should only be considered if there are overriding justifications for the work which cannot be met via other means requiring less intervention.

30. The large room 0.09 to the south side of the entrance is considered to be the kitchen built in c1761 and certainly the high ceiling, the simplicity and irregularity of the walls and what appear to be large chimney spaces and projections, all point to the space being designed to be functional and a service area rather than a 'polite' space. The cruciform leaded windows are however more characteristic of a late C17 date especially with the decorated ironmongery, and by 1761 you would certainly expect sashes, or simpler iron framed casements in areas of lower order, to be installed on a building of this status. Therefore it has been conjectured that the window may have been moved already, although however this is by no means certain.

**Provision of new access and reception space**

31. With the present room layout on the east side of the Hall there is currently no straightforward way of moving from the new entrance and de-cluttered space into a larger reception and admin area. This kitchen area is considered by the architects to be the ideal space for the reception with its 'airy' high ceiling height and proximity to the entrance, and added security of having one principal general public access. The issue is that in order to have a wide DDA compliant access from the entrance space to the reception function the C17 window has to be removed. The window however is intended to be retained and will be re-hung within the reception as a screen/feature thereby retaining this historic fabric in relation to its historic position within the building.

32. Following initial discussions, both ourselves and English Heritage voiced reservation regarding the removal of the window and have requested that possible alternative spaces be used for the reception area or an alterative opening created. Subsequently this area was omitted from the main application for less contentious alterations to the building. As discussed above after further analysis by the applicants it has been concluded that the nature of the building layout on the east side means that there are no alternative rooms which can provide the same 'entrance' reception. Alternative means of access to the room were explored, but they were found not to be sufficient to comply with DDA, and also involved some loss of historic fabric. Further justification for the removal of the window and loss of part of the wall has also been provided. The applicants therefore consider that this is the only option which meets the criteria of creating a safe and accessible reception area for the running of the Hall following the wider refurbishment of the buildings.

**Improvements to public access and connectivity**

33. It is considered that an important consideration should be that the Hall and its grounds are undergoing a significant change in terms of phasing which will define

how the building is to be used for decades to come; this is therefore not an ad-hoc proposal along the lines of previous C20 extensions or alterations. Creating better linkages to the courtyard buildings and further east to the proposed Enterprise Centre are key to making this new phase successful.

34. Pedestrian access would also be enabled through the east courtyard with these works. This links into the wider refurbishment plans of Earlham Hall that have recently been approved. Improved lift access is proposed within the west part of the building. The east and west walls of the north courtyard have been granted consent to have part removed and linkages are to be provided through the building to other spaces and rooms. This aims to improve access and movement between the east courtyard of Earlham Hall and the north courtyard, with the overall aim of opening up the area surrounding and within the Hall to more people. Key to the operation of the building is for provision of a clear and accessible reception point to guide visitors and staff through this complex building and provide suitable information and guidance to attendees.

**Conclusion on loss of fabric and alterations**

35. The issues raised by English Heritage of the impact on historic fabric and importance of the spaces have been considered. Following initial consideration of the area the plans have been revised and alternatives put forward by the applicants. The original Hall is largely remaining unchanged in terms of significant alterations, whereas the courtyard buildings and the walled garden are to undergo significant changes in use and refurbishment. Seen within this context, the removal of one window, although considered to be of substantial harm if viewed in isolation, will lead to significant public benefits in terms of creating a better 'interface' between the Hall and the wider development to the east, which in turn will help the long term viable use and preservation of the building. Having taken a balanced view and taking into consideration the wider development of the site, the alteration should be considered an exceptional case and be approved.

36. In granting consent it is very important that a condition ensures that the window remains in its proposed position as an attached fixture and fitting. In this respect the windows will remain part of the listing, and the window can be reinstated and the alteration reversed if required in future. With regard to other conditions, it is important that this is linked in with the wider recording of the building during works and detailing of joinery. It is also important to request further details on making good, which needs to be carried out carefully in order to reinstate the area as a window opening in sympathetic materials rather than cement/blockwork/plastering which is sometimes used on lower status buildings. The conditions should ensure that the works are carried out to an acceptable quality for the importance of the Grade II* listed building.

## Equality and Diversity Issues

37. The proposed access way would provide improved access to the proposed reception area and inclusive use of this space benefiting both users of the Hall and employees operating within the building. A variety of secure routes are proposed through the building into external spaces and management of attendees on site will be improved by a single point of reception which is accessible to all. The area also provides for the safe evacuation of people from the Hall which is linked with proposals for improved fire evacuation routes as partly approved under application

12/00713/L.

## Conclusions

38. The original Hall is largely remaining unchanged in terms of significant alterations, whereas the courtyard buildings and the walled garden are to undergo significant changes in use and refurbishment. Seen within this context, the removal of one window, although considered to be of substantial harm if viewed in isolation, will lead to significant public benefits in terms of creating a better 'interface' between the Hall and the wider development to the east, which in turn will help the long term viable use and preservation of the building.

39. The window is to be retained within the space to that previously used at the Hall, and the extent of the works are kept to a minimum in terms of removing other historic fabric. The proposed works would improve accessibility and reception space at the main new entrance area on the east side of the Hall. The improvements to the area will also help in terms of managing the building. The proposed scheme thereby creates a more viable option to access issues than other possible alternative alterations within this space. Subject to conditions it is considered that the proposal accords with the criteria set out within policies HBE8, HBE9 and HBE12 of the City of Norwich Replacement Local Plan and policies 1 and 2 of the Joint Core Strategy and statement 12 of the NPPF.

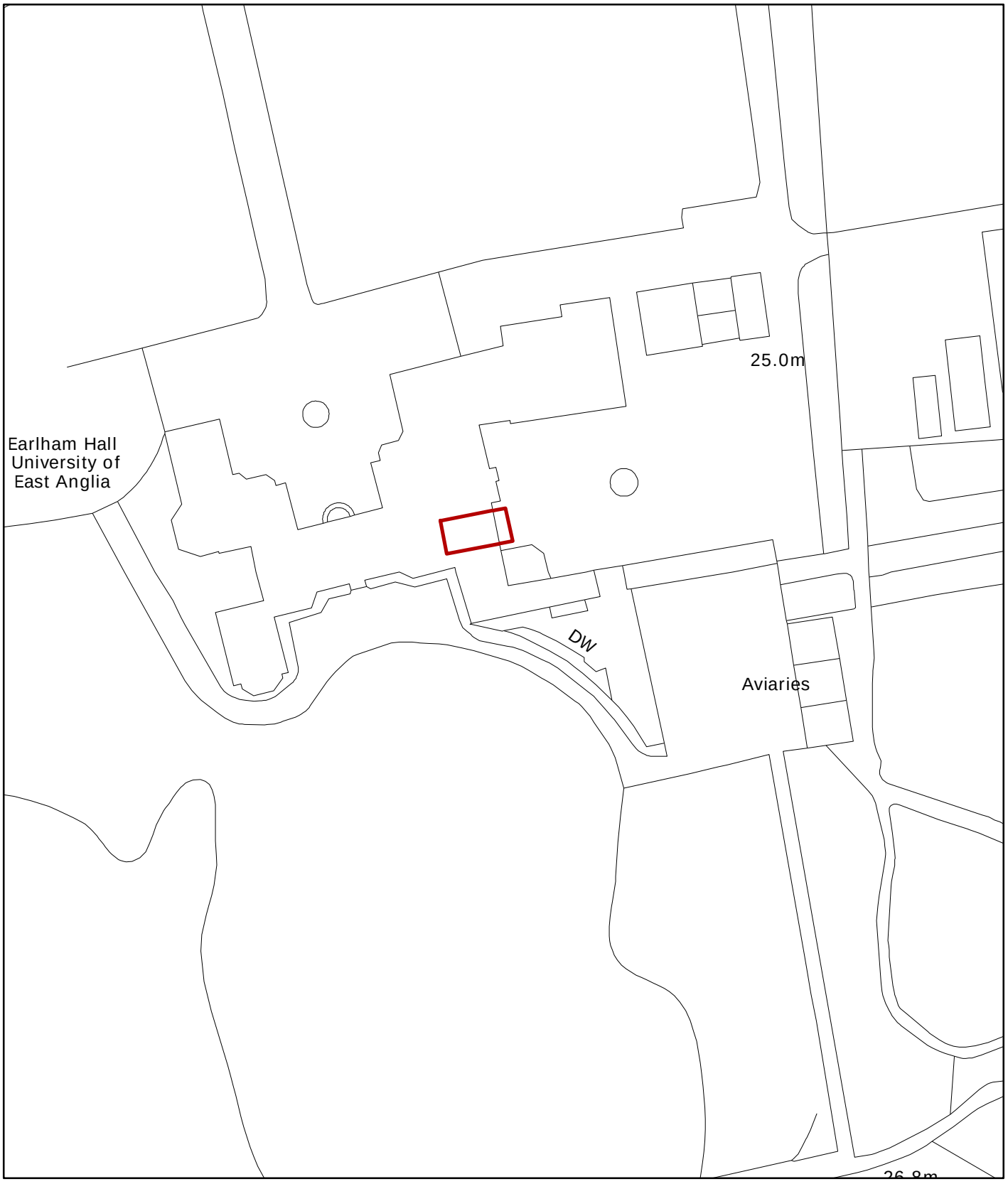
## RECOMMENDATIONS

To refer application no 12/01384/L "Removal of existing window 0.09W3 and relocation within the same room, 0.09, at the same height and directly related to its historic position, as a screen. Removal of brick spandrel panel below the window cill, formation of a new fire resisting door and screen in the extended opening" to the Secretary of State with a resolution to grant consent subject to the following conditions:

1) Standard time limit
2) In accordance with plans
3) Details of fixing and retention of window and shutters as part of fabric of building
4) Details of:
    a) Making good of exposed brickwork and area
    b) Joinery
    c) Recording of building during works

Reason for approval:

1) The window is to be retained within the space to that previously used at the Hall, and the extent of the works are kept to a minimum in terms of removing other historic fabric. The proposed works would improve accessibility and reception space at the main new entrance area on the east side of the Hall. The improvements to the area will also help in terms of managing the building. The proposed scheme thereby creates a more viable option to access issues than other possible alternative alterations within this space. Subject to conditions it is considered that the proposal accords with the criteria set out within policies HBE8, HBE9 and HBE12 of the City of Norwich Replacement Local Plan and policies 1 and 2 of the Joint Core Strategy and statement 12 of the NPPF.

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Planning Application No 12/01384/L
Site Address Earlham Hall, Earlham Road
Scale 1:750

NORWICH
City Council

PLANNING SERVICES

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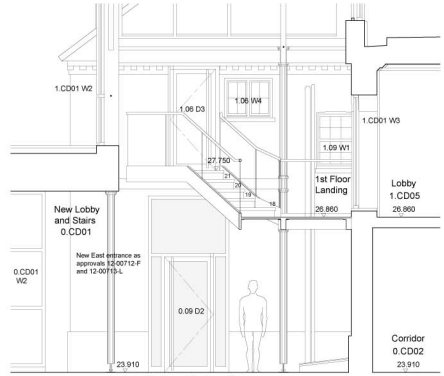
This drawing is not to be scaled. The architect is to be informed of any errors before work proceeds. The general contractor is responsible for checking all dimensions

## Notes

Section A-A
Scale 1:50

Section B-B
Scale 1:50




Section X-X
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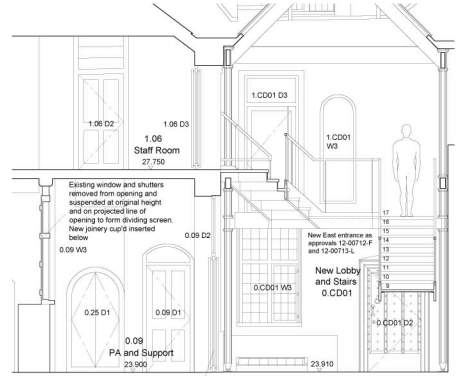


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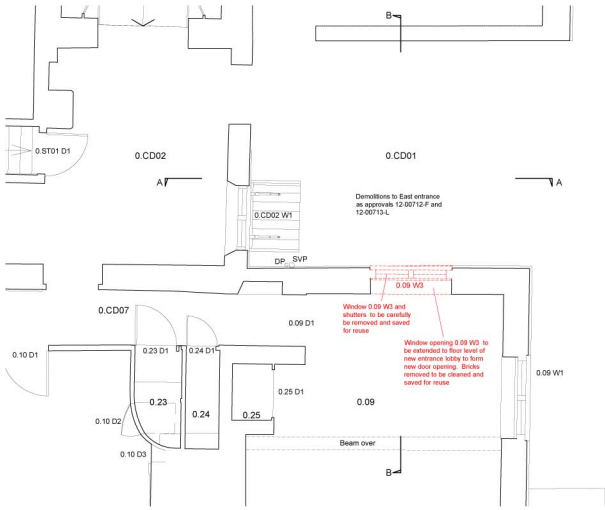


Plan Demolitions 0.09
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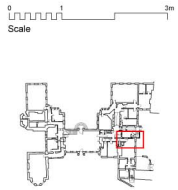
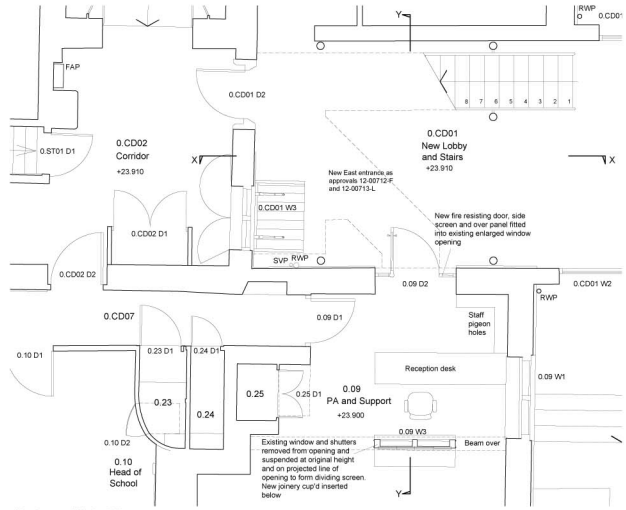





Location Plan




Plan Proposed Works 0.09
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Planning and LBC Application

Re Date + notes DrwnChkd
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Project
Earlham Hall

Drawing
East Wing
New Door to 0.09

| Job Ref | Dwg No | Revision |
|---|---|---|
| CNV 04 | 2041 | 00 |
| Scale(s) | Size Drwn | Chkd |
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Status
Planning


File location: H:\Jobs\CNA to CNZ\CNV Earlham\1-Hall\JBA CNV04 conservation statement and fees\CAD\Issued\2000-2999 SAs\2000-0099 Plans\CNV04-2041-00 East Wing New Door to 0.09.dwg Last Plotted: 25/6/2012 3:34PM