

Report to Planning applications committee
Date 10 October 2013
Report of Head of planning services
Subject 13/01300/F Land opposite 6 to 8 Bland Road Norwich

Item
5(2)

SUMMARY

Description:	Erection of 2 No. two bed houses and 3 No. three bed houses.
Reason for consideration at Committee:	City Council development
Recommendation:	Approve
Ward:	Bowthorpe
Contact Officer:	Tracy Armitage Senior Planner - Development 01603 212502
Valid Date:	17th August 2013
Applicant:	Orwell Homes
Agent:	Rees Pryer Architects LLP

INTRODUCTION

The Site

Location and Context

1. The site comprises 26 unoccupied council owned garages located on the eastern side of Bland Road. The site has a street frontage and faces two storey houses located on the opposite side of the road and shares a boundary with four storey flats on Wilberforce Road. Public open space lies immediately to the east and south of the site

Constraints

2. Semi-mature trees are located immediately to the north and east of the site
3. The site abuts land designated as open space, which in this location is used for children's play. The play area adjoins a wider open space network which is designated a County Wildlife Site and falls within the Yare Valley Character Area part of the River Valley.

Topography

4. The site is generally level with a gentle fall in a southern direction.

Equality and Diversity Issues

There are no significant equality or diversity issues.

The Proposal

5. The proposal consists of the re-development of the site for affordable housing following the demolition of the existing garages. A terrace of five two storey

dwellings is proposed, fronting Bland Road (3x three-bed and 2x two-bed) with private gardens to the rear.

6. Parking is proposed in a lay-by, to be created to the front of the new terrace.

Representations Received

7. Adjacent and neighbouring properties have been notified in writing. No letters of representation have been received.

Consultation Responses

8. Local Highway Authority – No objection
9. Natural Areas Officer - This currently derelict site has little biodiversity value, and its use for new housing should improve the overall character of the area. The mitigation measures outlined in the ecological report should be applied during the construction phase, and construction plant and building materials should not encroach upon the County Wildlife Site boundary. I was unable to access the revised design statement, but the biodiversity enhancements suggested in the ecological report should be incorporated into the development wherever feasible. In addition, ground level 5"/12 cm gaps should be provided in both the external and internal garden boundaries, which I understand will be close-boarded timber fencing, to allow hedgehogs and other small animals free passage through the development upon its completion.
10. Norfolk Constabulary – No objection
11. Environmental Health – A desk top investigation has been carried out to assess the risk of contamination of this garage site. The risk is considered low but further precautionary testing is recommended – this can be addressed through the imposition of a suitable planning condition.

ASSESSMENT OF PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Relevant Planning Policies

National Planning Policy Framework:

Statement 4 - Promoting sustainable transport

Statement 6 - Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes

Statement 7 – Requiring good design

Statement 11 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Relevant policies of the adopted Joint Core Strategy for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk 2011

Policy 2 Promoting good design

Policy 3 Energy and Water

Policy 4 Housing delivery

Policy 12 The remainder of the Norwich urban area, including the fringe parishes

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

NE1 River Valleys and other environmental assets

NE7 Locally designated sites of nature conservation
HBE 12 High quality of design in new development
EP1 Contaminated land and former landfill sites
EP16 Water conservation and sustainable drainage systems
EP18 Energy Efficiency in development
EP22 High standard of amenity for residential occupiers
HOU5 Accessible housing
HOU6 Development Requirements for Housing Proposals
HOU 13 Proposals for new housing development on other sites
TRA6 Parking standards
TRA7 Cycle parking standards
TRA8 Service provision

Other Material Considerations

Development Management Policies Development Plan Document – Pre-submission policies (April 2013).

DM1 Sustainable development principles for Norwich
DM2 Ensuring satisfactory living and working conditions
DM3 Delivering high quality design
DM4 Providing for renewable and low carbon energy
DM8 Planning effectively for open space and recreation
DM9 Safeguarding Norwich's heritage
DM12 Ensuring well-planned housing development
DM28 Encouraging sustainable travel
DM 30 Access and highway safety
DM31 car parking and serving

Procedural Matters Relating to the Development Plan and the NPPF

The Joint Core Strategy and Replacement Local Plan (RLP) have been adopted since the introduction of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act in 2004. With regard to paragraphs 211 and 215-216 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), both sets of policies have been subjected to a test of compliance with the NPPF. Both the 2011 JCS policies and the 2004 RLP policies above are considered to be compliant with the NPPF. The Council has also reached submission stage of the emerging new Local Plan policies, and considers most of these to be wholly consistent with the NPPF. Weight must be given to the emerging Local Plan and relevant policies are listed below for context although none change the thrust of the current Local Plan policies discussed in the main body of this report:
Emerging policies of the forthcoming new Local Plan (submission document for examination, April 2013):

Key matters for consideration

- Principle of residential development of this site
- Suitability of this site for residential development
- Design considerations.
- Amenity consideration for future and adjoining residents
- Impact of the development on the adjoining open space and trees

Principle of Development - Policy considerations

12. The garage site is unused, has stood empty for some time and has needed to be made secure following incidents of break-ins and vandalism. The site has had no prior commercial use and is located within a primarily residential area subject to

no specific policy designations.

13. This previously developed site is in an accessible location, within the urban area and in an area of existing housing. The principle of development is therefore in accordance with the objectives of National and Local Policy which promote sustainable housing growth and JCS Policy 12 which encourages neighbourhood based renewal. The proposal will deliver two and three bedroom family homes and contribute towards meeting identified housing need in the city.

Design and amenity

14. The site is considered suitable for the number of dwellings proposed and the layout provides adequate space for private gardens and reasonable levels of outlook and amenity. Amenity levels will also be considerably enhanced by the ease of access from this site to the adjacent public open space and play area. The site is well enclosed by existing boundary tree planting which provide a distinct visual break between the site and the flats to the north. In this position the trees both filter views of the development from properties and minimise overshadowing and overlooking effects.
15. The terraced built form makes efficient use of the space available and creates a strong street presence. The properties are arranged to be as safe as possible, with natural surveillance, lighting and well defined public/private spaces. The proposed dwellings are of similar height and scale to the existing properties opposite and have a simple contemporary appearance, incorporating an asymmetrical roof form, large windows to maximise natural light and external finish featuring brick and natural timber. The design of the properties is such that they will positively contribute to the residential character of the area.

Impact on trees and landscape

16. The scheme seeks to ensure that the trees adjoining the site are not affected by the development and their retention will substantially soften the visual impact of the new dwellings on the character and appearance of the adjacent open space and Yare Valley Character Area. Given the scale of the development and the boundary trees, it is considered that the development will integrate well into the wider landscape. The Council's Open Spaces Officer has raised no objection to the application and has made some details recommendation to ensure that opportunities are taken to support local biodiversity.

Sustainability matters

17. The design approach has been guided by sustainable development principles and seeks to minimise energy needs both during construction and by residents, long term. The terrace is orientated on an east – west axis and fenestration is arranged to maximise natural day light and solar gain. In addition the dwellings have been designed to meet level 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes and will be highly insulated. The approach ensures that materials and construction methods used are A/A+ rated by the Green Guide and that a smaller scale measures to enhance biodiversity are incorporated into the garden plots.

Affordable Housing

18. On residential schemes of this scale, adopted policy requires 20% of dwelling numbers to be affordable. This scheme exceeds policy requirements and all of the proposed dwellings would be made available by a registered provider at an affordable rent. The Norwich area has an identified need for new affordable

housing with 677 affordable homes needing to be developed in Norwich each year and this development will contribute towards meeting this target.

19. The promotion of this council owned site has been discussed with Orbit Housing Association who have committed to the whole site being affordable housing in perpetuity secured through a covenant in the contract for the sale. They have indicated however that to attract the HCA grant required to make the scheme eligible and viable for development, that they would require the use of affordable rents. Orbit have indicated that the rent difference between social and affordable rents will be negligible and the houses will average about 75% of the lower 30th percentile of market rent. Given that the site will be 100% affordable the proposed tenure is considered to be acceptable.

Parking and servicing

20. Parking is proposed to the front of the development in a new lay-by within the adopted highway. The lay-by would provide 5+ parking spaces and would be available but not exclusive to the development. Secure cycle parking is proposed in the rear garden of each dwelling. The local Highway Authority is satisfied with this provision, in a location that is also served by a regular bus service.
21. Bin storage is proposed within the rear garden area of each dwelling accessed via a rear passage way. The location and access arrangements are considered satisfactory.

Local Finance Considerations

22. Under Section 143 of the Localism Act the council is required to consider the impact on local finances. It is a material consideration when assessing this application. The benefits from the finance contributions for the council however must be weighed against the above planning issues. In this case the financial considerations are relatively limited and therefore limited weight should be given to them.

Financial Liability	Liable?	Amount
New Homes Bonus	Yes	Based on council tax band. Payment of one monthly council tax amount per year for six years + affordable housing premium
Council Tax	Yes	Band not yet known
Community Infrastructure Levy	Yes – Social Housing Relief available.	Nil
Business Rates	No	-

Conclusions

23. It is considered that the garaging is not currently providing an effective use of land and that the proposed development will deliver significant benefit in terms of delivering new affordable homes and urban renewal. The design layout is considered acceptable with a good relationship between public and private realm. Access, parking and servicing arrangements are also considered to be appropriate as are the amenity standards for existing and proposed dwellings. The development also responds to site constraints in terms of their implications for trees, energy efficiency and contamination. Subject to the conditions listed the

proposals are considered to be acceptable and will provide for much needed housing development in this part of the City.

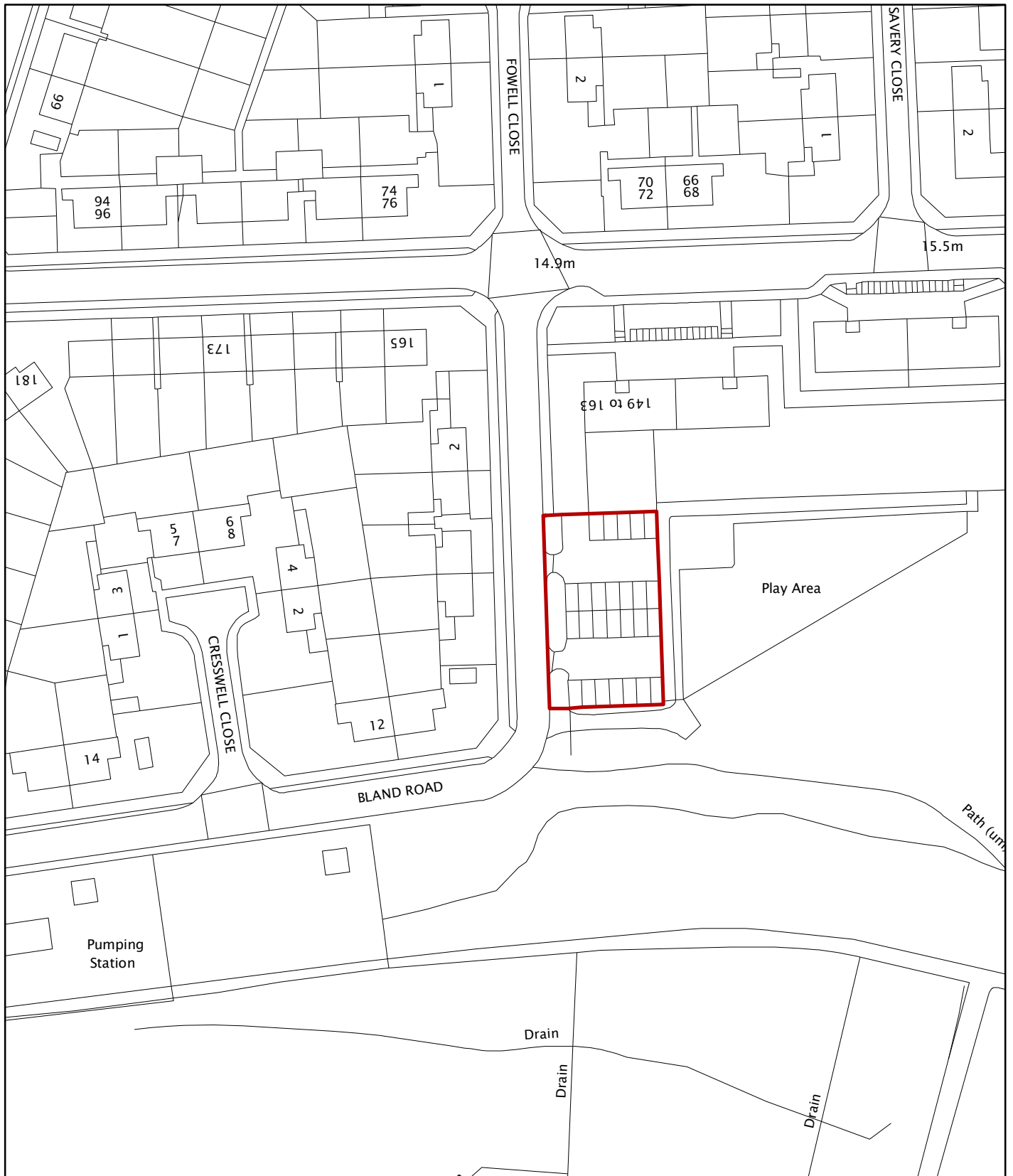
RECOMMENDATIONS

To approve Application 13/01300/F land opposite 6-8 Bland Road and grant planning permission, subject to the following conditions:-

1. Commencement of development within 3 years from the date of approval;
2. Development to be in accordance with drawings and details
3. Details of facing and roofing materials; joinery; boundary treatments, walls and fences; external lighting;
4. Details of hard and soft landscaping, planting, biodiversity enhancements.
5. Details of tree protection measures/provision and retention
6. Method statement for the construction of side and rear access/erection of boundary fence
7. Development to be implemented in accordance with the recommendations set out in section 5 of the Ecological survey and pre-assessment survey ref:2013/113
8. Details and provision of off-site car parking
9. Details and provision of cycle parking
10. Implementation of sustainability measure/energy efficiency measures as outlined in Design and Access Statement
11. Site contamination conditions
12. Control on imported materials

Article 31(1)(cc) Statement

The local planning authority in making its decision has had due regard to paragraph 187 of the National Planning Policy Framework as well as the development plan, national planning policy and other material considerations and has approved the application subject to appropriate conditions and for the reasons outlined in the committee report.



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Planning Application No 13/01300/F
 Site Address Land opposite 6-8 Bland Road

Scale 1:1,000



NORWICH
 City Council
 PLANNING SERVICES

