Report to	Planning applications committee	ltem
	06 August 2015	
Report of	Head of planning services	
Subject	Application no 15/00683/F - Mile Cross Area Housing Office, 2 - 8 Hansard Close, Norwich, NR3 2LY	4(E)
Reason	City council application and site	
for referral Applicant	Norwich City Council	

Ward:	Mile Cross
Case officer	Lee Cook -leecook@norwich.gov.uk

Development proposal		
Demolition of existing building and erection of 10 flats.		
Representations		
Object Comment Support		
1	0	0

Main issues	Key considerations
1 Principle	Provision of housing, loss of area office
2 Design	Scale, appearance, layout. Space
	standards. Amenity space. Character of
	area and adjacent conservation area.
3 Amenity	Impact on amenities of neighbouring
	properties (outlook, privacy, building
	impact).
4 Trees and landscaping	Protection of viable trees. Streetscape,
	planting mitigation and appropriate
	screening.
5 Transportation	Provision of parking and servicing. Suitable
	access.
Expiry date	10 August 2015
Recommendation	Approve



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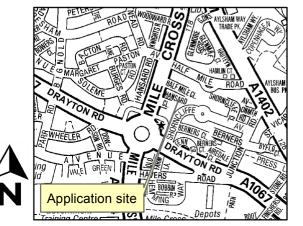
Scale

1:1,000





PLANNING SERVICES



The site and surroundings

1. The application site is approximately 1.5 miles North West of the city centre and has an existing vehicular access via Hansard Close. The site is currently occupied by the former Mile Cross Housing office and measures approximately 0.14 Ha. The surrounding area is predominantly residential in character with a proportion of social rent and affordable homes. A designated district retail centre surrounds the Mile Cross Road/Drayton Road roundabout to the south; containing an assortment of mainly A1 retail units. The vast majority of the surrounding buildings are red/orange brick and vary from two to three storey in height.

Constraints

2. The Mile Cross conservation area boundary is located to the south and west of the site and covers the main Mile Cross estate and north part of the district centre. The site is reasonably level and aligned to Hansard Close but slopes significantly along its southern boundary. This reflects the slope of ground levels down Mile Cross Road towards the river to the south.

Relevant planning history

3. The site contains the former Mile Cross Housing office and most recent planning history is related to the office use of these earlier domestic buildings.

The proposal

4. The scheme involves the demolition of existing buildings and erection of 10 flats arranged in two blocks.

Summary	information
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Proposal	Key facts
Scale	
Total no. of dwellings	10 units, with a mix of 8No 1B2P flats and 2No 2B3P flats
No. of affordable dwellings	10 No. Social rent flats
Total floorspace	Gross internal floor area of approximately 538m ²
No. of storeys	Two storey block on east side of site and three storey block on west side fronting corner of Hansard Close and Mile Cross Road
Max. dimensions	Block A approximately 13.65m wide x 10.6m deep x 9.1m to 10.3m tall. Block B approximately19.35m wide x 10.8m deep x 6.15m to 8.3m tall.
Density	Approximately 71 dwellings per hectare

Appearance		
Materials	Red brick (Hanson Breckland Multi Reserve) for the walls and single ply grey EPDM roofing system.	
Construction	Passivhaus specification with insulated and air-tight timber frame and brick cladding. Due to the orientation issues related to Block A this building will have to have a higher fabric performance than Block B.	
Energy and resource efficiency measures	Fully Passivhaus throughout	
Operation		
Ancillary plant and equipment	MVHR units are positioned within the access area for block A and within service cupboards to the side elevations of block B.	
Transport matters		
Vehicular access	Rearranged via Hansard Close and a new parking area to south side of site.	
No of car parking spaces	10 spaces including 2 disabled parking bays on Hansard Close and 4 spaces on south side of site.	
No of cycle parking spaces	12 bike stores and 2 sheds shown to be provided.	
Servicing arrangements	Via Hansard Close.	

Representations

5. Advertised on site and in the press. Adjacent and neighbouring properties have been notified in writing. A response has been received from the Norwich Society. No letters of representation have been received from neighbouring properties. All representations are available to view in full at http://planning.norwich.gov.uk/online-applications/ by entering the application number.

Issues raised	Response
Norwich Society: This development is lacking in imagination with large expanses of unrelieved brickwork. The roof shape is not in sympathy with the surrounding properties. A more imaginative solution would be more fitting.	Paragraph 27

Consultation responses

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

Environmental protection

7. No objection in principle. Happy to agree that the site contamination does not present any significant concerns over historical uses etc. Suggests condition relating to the discovery of previously unknown contamination. The proposed development does include private gardens and there will need to be a condition included for the importation of any material (e.g. topsoil etc.) for these areas. Also suggests informatives for asbestos clearing and for the minimisation of nuisance arising from the demolition and construction phases

Highways (local)

8. No objection in principle. The proposed development is suitable in transportation terms for its location with regard to its amount, layout and use. Has commented on highway works and separate legal agreements for adoption under the Highways Act and also suggests relevant conditions and informatives.

Housing strategy

9. No objection in principle. The development proposals for this brownfield site are welcomed providing for 100% of the units to be for social rent to further address housing need. The proposed affordable housing types and sizes match the identified housing need and demand in Norwich, in particular the need for one bedroom flats and two bedroom flats designed as wheelchair accessible. The provision of individual entrances to the flats is preferred. It is noted that the proposed scheme either meets or exceeds the HCA design and quality standards, that 10% of homes will meet the Lifetime Homes standard and that the London Mayor's Design Guide has been a reference point for both the internal room sizes and external amenity space. The proposal to achieve Passivhaus standards is particularly welcome, with benefits for both residents in terms of lower fuel bills, and the environment because of the lower carbon footprint. This also meets the council's environmental strategy 2015-19 priority 5 to ensure that new development is carried out in a sustainable way and the aspiration to explore the use of Passivhaus or CSH 4 for all new build. The scheme provides an acceptable percentage of parking provision including parking for the Lifetime Homes ground floor flat located within 10m of the flat entrance. The design of the private and public amenity space provides different settings for a range of activities for different ages and abilities, thereby helping to encourage participation and promote social inclusion.

Landscape

10. No written comment, informally discussed at pre-application stage.

Norfolk county planning and flood & water management team

11. No comments

Norfolk historic environment service

12. Consulted at pre-application stage and do not consider archaeological work to be necessary.

Tree protection officer

 No objection in principle. Happy with tree replacement numbers and landscape scheme for the site. Would like to see the proposed 'no-dig' construction below T7 (Turkey Oak) extended north to cover the whole of the proposed construction within the RPA.

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
 - JCS3 Energy and water
 - JCS4 Housing delivery
 - JCS6 Access and transportation
 - JCS7 Supporting communities
 - JCS9 Strategy for growth in the Norwich policy area
 - JCS12 The remainder of the Norwich urban area including the fringe parishes
 - JCS20 Implementation

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
- DM4 Providing for renewable and low carbon energy
- DM5 Planning effectively for flood resilience
- DM6 Protecting and enhancing the natural environment
- DM7 Trees and development
- DM9 Safeguarding Norwich's heritage
- DM11 Protecting against environmental hazards
- DM12 Ensuring well-planned housing development
- DM13 Communal development and multiple occupation
- DM22 Planning for and safeguarding community facilities
- DM28 Encouraging sustainable travel
- DM30 Access and highway safety
- DM31 Car parking and servicing
- DM33 Planning obligations and development viability

Other material considerations

16. 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
- NPPF10 Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
- NPPF11 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
- NPPF12 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

17. Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)

• Affordable housing SPD adopted March 2015

Case Assessment

18. 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 polices are detailed above. Material considerations include policies in the National Planning Framework (NPPF), the Councils 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

- 19. Key policies and NPPF paragraphs JCS4, JCS9, JCS20, DM1, DM8, DM12, DM13, DM22, DM33, NPPF paragraphs 9, 14, 17, 49, 73-75 129 and 141.
- 20. The application site is currently unoccupied with barriers provided to prevent the site being accessed. The site is not allocated for development within the current local plan. The housing office has been closed for a number of years and service provision provided elsewhere or in other forms. The type of historical use is not considered to formally fall within the community facilities description within policy DM22. Loss of the office space in this location is therefore considered to be acceptable.
- 21. The site provides the opportunity for new housing on a brownfield site with excellent access to jobs and services in the city centre and neighbouring shopping facilities at the district centre and supermarket. Residential use would be compatible with the character of the area and could contribute to the overall housing demands of the City. The re-use of land is encouraged through policy and paragraph 50 of the NPPF states that local authorities should deliver a wider choice of quality homes. Policies JCS 4, DM12 and DM13 are all supportive of new housing development which helps to meet housing need in the City.
- 22. The development is considered to respond to the concerns of local residents and officers in respect of pre-application discussions. The density of development compares with the characteristics of the area and provides just over 71 dwellings per hectare and arranges the accommodation in such a way as to provide an

attractive and well-designed scheme which provides linkages through the site. The principle of residential development is therefore acceptable and in accordance with the above policies subject to other material planning considerations below.

Main issue 2: Design and layout

- 23. Key policies and NPPF paragraphs JCS1, DM3, DM9, NPPF paragraphs 9, 17, 56, 60, 61, 64, 131 and 141.
- 24. The scheme has undergone lengthy discussions at pre-application and public consultation stage to enable a site layout which maximises development opportunities for new local housing and is designed to limit any impacts from increases in density on the site. The scheme has also been designed to take advantage of this unusual site which lies within an area where ground levels on the adjacent road network slope up from the river to the south thereby allowing some scope for slightly taller buildings which address and create interest along the main road frontage.
- 25. The Mile Cross conservation area opposite is primarily designated because of its social links to inter-war housing development and layout along strong garden city principles. The existing individual buildings are interesting and provide a variety of built forms which remain largely unchanged. The district centre to the south contains taller buildings which serve a purpose of providing additional accommodation in upper floors but also announce the presence of the retail area at the edge of the housing estate. Other new forms of development have been introduced around the estate and most recently along Valpy Avenue which continue to provide for a variety of built forms within the area.
- 26. The proposed development is arranged in two blocks of flats with a central pedestrian route to increase circulation north-south. The block A fronting Mile Cross Road takes advantage of the sloping ground along the adjacent roadway and is three storeys in height with a relatively flat roof form. When viewed from Hansard Close the roof slope continues visually with block B and provides an informal link between the two blocks. As individual building elements or as a whole the scheme provides an interesting design element within the street scene and area. The position of the development, built form and scale should not impact on the character of the conservation area opposite the site but continues the sense of change and adaptability within the area.
- 27. The proposed buildings pick up on the predominant use of red brick in the area. A number of options have been discussed to break up building facades and provide interest within the built form of the scheme. Following comments from the Norwich Society the agent has revised the elevation to help break up block A. Overall the position and variance of height of buildings creates a pleasant mix of built form within the area. Subject to conditions for individual design elements and materials the scheme is considered to make a positive contribution to the area.
- 28. The proposed dwellings meet with HCA space standards requirements. In addition in terms of a review of minimum internal floor areas as promoted by the RIBA "case for space" and included in the commentary to policy DM2 all of the dwellings exceed the indicative minimum floor area standards. There is an ability to convert two dwellings for "lifetime" type homes purposes and the design builds in circulation and facilities standards to meet design criteria for a percentage of such dwellings

within the development. The applicant has confirmed that 20% of the dwellings would be built to this lifetime homes standard which is significantly in excess of policy requirements of 10% of homes.

Main issue 3: Amenity

- 29. Key policies and NPPF paragraphs DM2, DM11, NPPF paragraphs 9 and 17.
- 30. The proposed buildings are sited north of the nearest existing properties on Mile Cross Road and at a lower ground level than those on the north side of Hansard Close. The design and position of the proposed buildings should not result in overshadowing or significant loss of light to existing properties within the area. Block A will have some visual impact on 62 Mile Cross Road but is positioned to be parallel to the side of this property and the rear projection limited and broken up in use of materials to help soften the form. No. 62 also has a single storey building to the side which increases separation of the new and proposed buildings.
- 31. Block A would result in a building height comparable to a two storey building with a pitched roof form but in order to create visual interest and improved site efficiency makes use of a flatter roof form within the proposed design which thereby provides two additional dwellings on site. The proposed siting results in approximately 5.6m to 6.3m separation distance between the upper floor of the buildings which is considered to be an acceptable building relationship within the context of the area.
- 32. At present the existing area office building is seen from the rear garden of neighbouring properties and the new development has been progressed with this existing relationship in mind. In this regard the proposed block B should not create a significant change in the outlook of properties in the area. It is noted that the existing building has windows at upper floor levels close to neighbouring properties. There may be some overlooking from the new first floor windows and balconies on the rear elevation to the rear amenity areas either side of the application site. However, windows do not directly overlook those areas and screens and replacement tree planting are provided to the limit any impacts from balconies of block B. Such an arrangement is typical of an urban environment and no significant loss of privacy of adjacent amenity areas is expected.
- 33. Early assessment of shading and building distances has indicated that there will be no significant loss of light or overlooking to adjacent properties. Any first floor windows to the side elevations of the new dwellings have been avoided and previously proposed balconies on the rear of block A have been removed from the scheme. The proposals work well with reference to their relationship with adjacent properties and subject to conditions on joinery and landscaping it is not considered that the proposals would result in any unacceptable impact to adjacent properties in terms of overlooking or overshadowing.

Main issue 4: Trees and Landscaping

- 34. Key policies and NPPF paragraphs JCS1, JCS2, JCS8, JCS12, DM3, DM6, DM7, DM8, DM9, DM33, NPPF paragraphs 17, 56, 58, 70, 74, 75, 109, 118 131 and 141.
- 35. Early assessment of the trees on site indicated that the turkey oak tree on the southern side of the site was the principle specimen suitable for retention due to its health and beneficial contribution to the edge of the conservation area and local

amenities. Other trees along the highway of Mile Cross Road are also considered important in terms of their contribution to the local area. These trees are shown to be retained and protected as part of the proposed scheme. In terms of the turkey oak further consideration is required to the construction exclusion zone for the tree and conditions are suggested requiring a pre-commencement site meeting and as necessary additional arboricultural method statement for works within the area of this tree.

36. The landscaping scheme provides for private and semi-private spaces with central walkway to serve as access to the district centre and additional new parking to the south. This is mainly designed with simple low maintenance communal areas and replacement tree planting along the walkway. Additional trees should help separate out the spaces on site and help screen adjacent garden spaces. The number of replacement trees will offset those which are to be lost. The scheme is considered to be acceptable subject to suitable landscaping and tree protection conditions.

Main issue 5: Transport

- 37. Key policies and NPPF paragraphs JCS2, JCS6, DM2, DM3, DM30, DM31, NPPF paragraphs 9, 17, 39, 40, 56 and 61.
- 38. The site is located in a residential area in close proximity to the Mile Cross district centre; there are frequent bus services to the city centre and good cycle access via Marriotts Way. The transportation officer has confirmed that, subject to conditions for specific details, the provision of parking, bin and bike stores are acceptable. The proposal should not result in any significant impacts on the operation of parking or servicing within the area.
- 39. The provision of parking spaces on Hansard Close will necessitate part of the adopted highway to be used for this purpose, and it is intended that the extent of adopted highway is expanded to include the parking bays (over housing land) adjacent to the Close which will require a dedication agreement. A section 278 agreement will be necessary to supervise the work of constructing these bays to an adoptable standard and obtaining highway dedication. The parking bays on the unnamed service road would also be adopted.

Compliance with other relevant development plan policies

40. A number of development plan policies include key targets for matters such as parking provision and energy efficiency. The table below indicates the outcome of the officer assessment in relation to these matters.

Requirement	Relevant policy	Compliance
Cycle storage	DM31	Yes subject to condition – private and secure cycle parking stores are shown within the site plan to meet development needs.
Car parking provision	DM31	Yes subject to condition – parking on Hansard Close has been rationalised and existing site access closed off. Further spaces are provided to the south of the site to allow for parking for existing and new residents.

Requirement	Relevant policy	Compliance
Refuse Storage/servicing	DM31	Yes subject to condition – main collection will be from Hansard Close as existing. Bin stores and collection are shown to be provided close to the highway for ease of collection. The design and position of stores should help reduce any visual clutter and obstruction within the area.
Biodiversity	DM6	Ecological appraisal is submitted showing survey results for protected species which might be on site. Demolition or development should not result in any significant harm to protected species. However, report recommends a series of ecological enhancements which are considered appropriate to incorporate into the development. Recommended that site enhancements are secured by condition.
Archaeology	DM9	Assessed at pre-application stage and agreed with HES that an archaeological survey is not required.
Contamination	DM11	The recommendations by the Council's environmental protection officer in regards to contamination and protecting the amenity of neighbouring properties or safety of site operatives during the construction are considered reasonable and should be conditioned on any approval.
Energy efficiency	JCS 1 & 3 DM3	Yes subject to condition – see comments in "other matters" section below
Water efficiency	JCS 1 & 3	Yes subject to condition
Sustainable urban drainage	DM3/5	Yes subject to condition – the developed site should cause a negligible change to the permeable area and therefore to surface water runoff. However, it is proposed that the surface water runoff will be managed by sustainable means in order to maintain, and where possible reduce, the effect of the site on the downstream catchment. Surface water runoff will be discharged to a cellular storage type soakaway located in the landscaping area to the south of the dwellings. The surface water runoff for all impermeable areas is proposed to be collected via RWPs and gullies which discharge to the soakaway. Such

Requirement	Relevant policy	Compliance
		measures are considered adequate for a development of this scale.

Other matters

- 41. The following matters have been assessed and considered satisfactory and in accordance with relevant development plan policies, subject to appropriate conditions and mitigation: List relevant matters.
- 42. Energy efficiency, water conservation and construction
- 43. A preliminary Passivhaus assessment has been carried out for the development. The buildings are aimed at achieving PassivHaus (PH) certification. PH standard was developed for residential buildings as a means of minimising the heating demand of the building, primarily achieved through considered orientation, internal arrangement and envelope design. PH is increasingly being applied to domestic buildings and is considered both a robust energy performance specification and a holistic low energy design concept.
- 44. Heating requirement in PH developments is reduced to the point where a traditional heating system is no longer considered essential. Thermal comfort can be achieved solely by post-heating or post-cooling of the fresh air mass. The MVHR units should provide energy-efficient background levels of ventilation throughout the year, but the building will also have opening windows that will allow residents and visitors to control their own environment.
- 45. The main performance difference between the two buildings comes from the orientation of the blocks which is driven by the site constraints. Due to the orientation issues related to Block A this building will have to have a higher fabric performance than Block B.
- 46. Energy demand for the buildings should comply with the requirement of PH building and utilise only 120kWh/m²/yr of primary energy. Current proposals do not propose any further energy production methods but the agent has been advised that should the buildings fall below PH standards then alternative energy installations should be provided to deliver at least 10% of annual energy demand.
- 47. The high standard for construction should also have built in efficiencies for water conservation and a number of methods have been discussed with the applicant's agent. The scheme is therefore considered to be acceptable and suitable conditions are suggested for the development to ensure energy systems are provided and maintained on site as necessary and that water conservation measures are incorporated into the scheme. A condition is also suggested in relation to plant and machinery to ensure that the positioning and specification of any equipment, such as the proposed MVHR units, does not cause harm to the amenities of the area.

Equalities and diversity issues

48. There are no significant equality or diversity issues.

S106 Obligations

- 49. Affordable Housing.
- 50. Following changes to Ministerial Guidance affordable housing is not now required as a percentage of housing delivered for this scale of development. It is noted; however, that it is the applicant's intention to deliver the scheme as 100% affordable housing at social rent levels.

Local finance considerations

- 51. 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.
- 52. 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.
- 53. In this case local finance considerations are not considered to be material to the case.

Conclusion

- 54. The proposed scheme provides a suitable arrangement of dwellings with associated parking and servicing. The layout responds to the constraints and topography of the site, links with the existing network within the areas adjoining the site and would lead to an attractive development in accordance with local and national policy. The design and layout is considered acceptable with a good relationship between the public and private realms. Subject to conditions it is envisaged that the proposed development will achieve an appropriate standard of design and would be well integrated with the surrounding area.
- 55. The development of 100% affordable housing would contribute to the promotion of affordable housing in Norwich in bringing forward a scheme for suitably rented units on site as well as helping combat fuel poverty in the promotion of passivhaus standards for new housing construction. The scheme also proposes site specific solutions to parking, servicing and access which aim to reduce any potential impacts on the wider area. The resultant scheme brings forward a brown field site in a comprehensive and integrated development. Amenity standards are considered to be appropriate for existing and proposed dwellings. The development also responds to site constraints in terms of their implications for trees, energy efficiency, drainage and contamination. 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. 15/00683/F - Mile Cross Area Housing Office 2 - 8 Hansard Close Norwich NR3 2LY 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 accord with drawings and details;
- 3. Details of plant and machinery;
- 4. Details of facing and roofing materials; joinery; verges, vent systems, external lighting;
- 5. Details of car parking, cycle storage, bin stores provision;
- 6. Details of off-site highways works,;
- 7. Details of landscaping, planting, biodiversity enhancements, site treatment works, boundary treatments, gates, walls and fences, access road and path link surface and landscape maintenance;
- 8. Pre-construction site meeting, details of arboricultural monitoring and where necessary AMS for protection of existing tree planting;
- 9. Compliance with AIA, AMS and Tree Protection Scheme implemented prior to commencement;
- 10. Retention of tree protection;
- 11. Details of provision and maintenance of LZC technologies and renewable energy sources should development not achieve passivhaus accreditation;
- 12. Details of water efficiency measures;
- 13. Surface water drainage management:
- 14. Cessation of works if unknown contaminants found;
- 15. Details of all imported material prior to occupation.

Informatives

- Considerate constructors
- Advisory on Asbestos
- Impact on wildlife
- Highways contacts, permits, design note, works within the highway etc.

Article 35 (2) 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, following negotiations with the applicant and subsequent amendments at the pre-application and application stage the application has been approved subject to suitable land management, adoption, appropriate conditions and for the reasons outlined within the committee report for the application.



