

Report to Planning applications committee
Date 4 September 2014
Report of Head of planning services
Subject Application no 14/00630/F Aldwych House, 57 Bethel Street Norwich NR2 1NR

Item
4.7

SUMMARY

Description:	Alterations to roof and rear second floor extension to create 4 no. apartments and external alterations to the building including new window openings (Revised plans and description).
Reason for consideration at Committee:	Objection
Recommendation:	Approve
Ward:	Mancroft
Contact Officer:	Mr Lee Cook Senior Planner 01603 212536
Valid Date:	10th May 2014
Applicant:	Michael Ford Investments
Agent:	Lanpro Services

INTRODUCTION

The Site

Location, Context and Constraints

1. The site is located on the south side of Bethel Street within the St Giles character area of the City Centre Conservation Area. This part of the Conservation Area is regarded as being of high significance. The western part of the character area is predominantly residential with houses of various sizes dating mostly from the C18 to C20. The streets running east-west, particularly St. Giles and Upper St. Giles Streets are home to numerous commercial uses. The area around Aldwych House is a mixture of mainly commercial properties along Bethel Street and some residential uses to the south and further west.
2. Aldwych House is a C20th building with a distinct 2 storey frontage element identified as having a positive frontage within the conservation area. The rear part of the building has a mansard roof and is two to three storeys in height plus basement area. Pedestrian and limited vehicular access to the site is provided from Bethel Street via an access area adjoining a side alley Watts Court at the west of Aldwych House which links through to Chapelfield North. To the south Chapelfield Gardens is one of the largest recreation spaces in the Central Conservation Area.
3. To the west of the site the previous 20th century additions to the Labour Club have been demolished under previous consents for that site to the rear of the three-storey Grade II Listed Buildings fronting Bethel Street. Aldwych House is located adjacent to several other listed buildings around its boundaries. The building is

vacant, with the ground floor in use earlier this year for Class B1(a) offices.

Topography

4. Bethel Street slopes east to west in this location; however a bigger variation in ground level is from Bethel Street rising up to Chapelfield North. The car park area at the rear of the site is built above ground floor level of the site.

Planning History

5. The property has been in use as offices for many years. Early history for the site is recorded as including:

26506 erection of offices and warehouse accommodation, two storey and basement, with loading provision and parking for three cars at the side for Valpamour Co Ltd
Approved 5/9/62

40391 Change of use of office and warehouse to offices at Valpamour House
approved 7/4/72

41843 Conversion of warehouse and showroom to offices and addition of one extra floor
Approved 7/2/73

77/1094/CU Change of use of part second floor offices to school of language
Approved 6/9/77

77/1220/CU Change of use of part ground floor for storage and offices
Approved 20/10/77

79/0053/CU Change of use of part ground floor as offices and duplicator centre
Approved 28/2/79

79/0898/CU Change of use of part first floor from offices to photographic studio
Approved 5/9/79

81/0889/CU Change of use of photo studio to office unit 2
Approved 17/9/81

12/01319/U Change of use of ground floor from offices (Class B1) to storage (Class B8) – Approved 7/9/12 but understood not to have been implemented.

Application **13/02084/PDD** for change of use from offices (Class B1a) to 18 No. flats (Class C3a) was approved on 6th February 2014. The application was for prior approval. In accordance with Statutory Instrument 1101 The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Amendment) Order 2013, paragraph J.2, the matters which can be considered when determining such an application are transport and highways impacts of the development, contamination risks of the site and flood risks on the site. Therefore this proposal needs to read in the context of this recent approval.

The land to the west of the site was occupied for many years by the Labour Club but is now vacant and under new ownership. Planning permission and listed building consent to convert the Listed Building at 59 Bethel Street to eight flats and the erection of 9 houses and 5 flats to the rear, a total of 22 units have previously been granted under applications 08/00670/L, 08/00671/F and revision to the conversion element under 09/01005/L

Those proposals involve the erection of 3 flats on the corner of Bethel Street and Watts Court with 8 town houses running parallel to Watts Court, 3 of which have integral garages which are accessed via Chapelfield North. To the west of the site a single house was proposed adjacent to two Mews apartments with five parking spaces

beneath. The proposals range in height between 3 – 3½ storeys and included a total of 8 parking spaces.

Equality and Diversity Issues

There are no significant equality or diversity issues. The new dwellings would be in an accessible location. All new dwellings would be subject to Building Regulations to ensure accessibility for disabled persons where possible.

The Proposal

6. The initial proposals for the site included additions to increase the floor levels from two to four storeys at the Bethel street frontage and from two to three existing to four storeys proposed to the main building located to the rear of the site to create 20 additional dwellings to the 18 allowed for under prior approval. The whole of the building façade was to receive a render finish. The proposal also included a number of larger windows and balconies to provide openings for the 18 dwellings and for the 20 proposed dwellings as well as external balcony access and escape stairs and associated storage and amenity areas.
7. Following initial consultation and discussions with the agent the scheme has been revised. The proposal is now for 4 additional dwellings which involves a smaller alteration of the roof to the Bethel Street building and an additional new floor level above the two storey element at the rear adjacent to the existing car park. The type and size of windows has been reviewed and a number of those at the rear reduced in size and balconies removed.
8. The rear well is partially removed together with external escape stair and platform and ground opened up to allow windows to the lower floor areas at the rear of the building. The position of bins and bike storage has also been revised and landscape introduced between the side yard and adjacent private garden space.

Representations Received

9. Advertised on site and in the press. Adjacent and neighbouring properties have been notified in writing. 5 letters of representation were received under the original proposal consultation and 4 representations from 3 individuals have been received for the revised proposal consultation, citing the issues as summarised in the table below.
- 10.

Issues Raised 1 st proposed scheme	Response
Ecology report is limited to assessment of bats. There are bat species in the area which makes the building a potential roost. Demolition should be undertaken under supervision. The area also supports house sparrows, requests nesting boxes and possibly also for swifts given height proposed.	Para 16, 47 and 48
Dimensions not shown on drawings. Description is	Scale drawings have been

<p>misleading in terms of height.</p>	<p>provided showing existing and proposed spaces. An interpretation has been given for the overall height based on measurement from fixed points on the building.</p>
<p>Large new windows will impact on amenities – creating overlooking, loss of privacy and increased noise escape from the building.</p>	<p>Para 7, 8, 24 to 30</p>
<p>Impacts on Human Rights – right to enjoy privacy and a quiet and safe environment.</p>	<p>The Act is included within standing duties and the necessity to have due regard in assessments of merits, recommendation and decision</p>
<p>Loss of light and loss of outlook from the creation of a taller building. Overbearing impact from increased mass and height. A shadow study should be produced to assess impacts.</p>	<p>Para 7, 8, 23</p>
<p>Concern about the density of development – out of character with surrounding housing and leads to increased impacts on amenities.</p>	<p>Para 7, 19, 23, 30 and 41</p>
<p>Concern about lack of information on floor plans to show what rooms windows will serve within the 18 flats area.</p>	<p>Para 5, 24</p>
<p>Given prospective sale prices the scheme could encourage transient occupation and buy to let with people having less regard to existing residents.</p>	<p>Para 26</p>
<p>Inner City housing should aim to maintain vitality and a sustainable community within urban centres.</p>	<p>Para 19, 20 and 26</p>
<p>Ability for residents on Chapelfield to escape traffic noise from the south within their properties will be lost by the increase of residents and noise to new development to the north.</p>	<p>Para 7, 8, 26 and 30</p>
<p>Adverse impact on the conservation area and nearby listed buildings. Requirement to have regard to preserving or enhancing character of such areas and protecting the setting of listed buildings.</p>	<p>Para on relevant material considerations 32, 33, 37 and 41</p>
<p>Adverse impact on and loss of detail within frontage building by increasing height and adding render. Contention that this building is a part of architectural heritage and a rare and fine example which should be protected. Adverse impact on street-scene by increased bulk of extension and building treatment. Importance to protect site lines to existing buildings of townscape importance.</p>	<p>Para 7, 8, 36 and 37</p>
<p>Concern about quality, maintenance problems and appearance of materials to be used – specifically render e.g. use of render on Theatre Royal.</p>	<p>Para 7, 36 and 39</p>

A contemporary approach could be taken to new building at roof level rather than that proposed.	Assessment is made on the basis of the submitted proposals rather than possible alternatives for the site.
Inappropriate location for waste bins – will give rise to smell and noise disturbance especially from high usage expected with development proposed. Will create more disturbances when bins are moved to site frontage for collection and with increased footfall at rear of site and from people using rear stairs and external walkways to access the area.	Para 7, 8, 31 and 42
Concern that no parking is provided. With recent removal of existing on-street parking and demand from new residents parking situation will be exacerbated. Some spaces should be provided on site possibly 8 to provide for a percentage of occupants likely to own a vehicle.	Para 43
No provision is made for social housing. Valuation of properties and scheme viability questioned.	Para 21 and 22
Concern about lack of LZC credentials – sustainable construction, energy production, water conservation.	Para 44
Concern about the sale of land by St. Mary's Croft owners to assist development.	Would be a private matter not part of application assessment.
Frontage building needs to be spot listed.	Building is not listed and no requests have been made to list it - not part of application assessment.
FOI request.	Related mainly to publicly available information and has been responded to.
Issues Raised 2nd proposed scheme	
	Response
Object to impacts of rear building which is as originally submitted.	The proposed building is lower and one neighbour corrected their comments on this point
Previous planning history should be researched – original permissions had regard to amenities and character of area by limiting number of rear windows, using brick etc.	Para 5, 23, 30, 32 to 41
Building height and vertical wall extension would still create an overbearing impact on neighbours.	Para 23
Impacts on Human Rights – Art 1 Art 8 right to enjoy privacy and a quiet and safe environment.	See above
New windows are very close to lower parts of adjacent house and would no longer have privacy to which residents are entitled. Increased number of windows	Para 24 to 30

and size will lead to noise problems and overlooking.	
Concern about lack of information on floor plans to show what rooms windows will serve within the 18 flats area.	Para 5, 24
Concern about the density of development – out of character with surrounding housing and leads to increased impacts on amenities.	Para 7, 19, 23, 30 and 41
Given prospective sale prices the scheme could encourage transient occupation and buy to let with people having less regard to existing residents.	Para 26
What percentage could be stipulated to be owner occupied?	Para 26
Adverse impact on the conservation area and listed buildings at rear. Requirement to have regard to preserving or enhancing character of such areas and protecting the setting of listed buildings. Duty to protect future use of listed buildings by preventing inappropriate development nearby.	Para on relevant material considerations and 32, 33, 37 and 41
Roof pitch to front alteration is inappropriate.	Para 37
Concern about quality, maintenance problems and appearance of materials – specifically render to be used e.g. use of render on Theatre Royal.	Para 39
Careful consideration of parking permits available is required.	Para 43
Inappropriate location for waste bins – will give rise to smell and noise disturbance especially from high usage expected with development proposed. Will create more disturbances when bins are moved to site frontage for collection and with increased footfall at rear of site and from people using amenity area.	Para 31 and 42
Concern about the sale of land by St. Mary's Croft owners to assist development.	Would be a private matter not part of application assessment.

11. Norwich Society: is pleased that many of the previous comments expressed about the proposals for this site have been addressed, particularly those relating to the scale of development and front elevation of the building. Makes further comments on the revised proposals – pleased to see the retention of the brickwork on the Bethel Street façade and returns on side elevations together with keeping central entrance feature. The new steep hipped mansard roof on the front elevation retains the appropriate street scale. A tiled roof here may be preferable to the proposed slate one. Note other main elevations are to have a rendered finish and suggest that this is a suitable colour in place of the self-colour proposed. This would give a more pleasing appearance to the elevations when viewed from the surrounding buildings. The end wall to the projecting part of the building on the rear (elevation C far right hand side, elevation D far left hand side) is vertical for its full height. If it is possible to provide a hipped end to the Mansard roof at this point it would look better and relate more to the other roof areas.

Consultation Responses

12. English Heritage: Objected to initial proposal due to impacts on main building and adjacent heritage assets. No subsequent comment on revised scheme.
13. Norfolk Constabulary: No objection in principle. Recommend that the development incorporates principles of "Secured by Design" and that this development should seek to achieve full Secured by Design Certification. Also provide comments and guidance on detailing to doorsets and windows; access control; glazing; post boxes; cycle storage; external lighting; and internal lighting.
14. City wide services: No objection in principle, even though there is more than 5 metres travel for bins to the highway it appears to be flat ground and there will be minimal manoeuvring of the bins. The bins will need to be the bulk variety stored within the bin stores.
15. Local highway authority: No objection on transportation grounds subject to clarification of cycle and refuse storage matters. Requested Informatives to be added to any consent
16. Natural Areas Officer: No objection in principle. Requested protection and assessment for bats and provision of nesting boxes for birds.
17. Private Sector Housing: No objection in principle but notes potential impacts in relation to means of escape with first submitted scheme. No further comments made on revised scheme.
18. Strategic Housing: No objection in principle, comments on s106 requirements and need for external viability assessment on first submitted scheme; see assessment below.

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 10 – Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change

Statement 11 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Statement 12 – Conserving and enhancing the historic 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 3 – Energy and water

Policy 4 – Housing delivery

Policy 6 – Access and transportation

Policy 9 – Strategy for growth in the Norwich Policy Area
Policy 20 – Implementation

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

EP18 – High standard of energy efficiency for new development
EP20 – Sustainable use of materials
EP22 – High standard of amenity for residential occupiers
HBE3 – Area of main archaeological interest
HBE8 – Development in Conservation Areas
HBE9 – Listed Buildings and development affecting them
HBE12 – Design
HOU13 – Proposals for new housing development on other sites
HOU18 – Construction of houses in multiple occupation
NE8 – Habitat protection and enhancement
NE9 – Comprehensive landscaping scheme
TRA6 – Parking standards – maxima
TRA7 – Cycle parking standards
TRA8 – Servicing standards
TRA9 – Car Free Housing – Criteria

Supplementary Planning Documents and Guidance

City Centre Conservation Area Appraisal
SPD Conversion and development of houses in multiple occupation

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. The 2011 JCS policies and the 2004 RLP policies above are considered to be wholly and mainly 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. Where discrepancies or inconsistent policies relate to this application they are identified and discussed within the report; varying degrees of weight are apportioned as appropriate.

Emerging DM Policies

Development Management Policies Development Plan Document – Regulation 22 submission version (April 2013).

Please note that these policies were submitted to the Planning Inspectorate on 17th April 2013 and have now been subject to formal examination. Some weight can now be applied to these policies. Some policies are subject to objections or issues being raised at pre-submission stage. As these issues are unlikely to be known to be resolved within the time frame of the application they have not be given significant weight.

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

DM6 – Protecting and enhancing the natural environment
DM9 – Safeguarding Norwich's heritage
DM12 – Principles for all residential development
DM13 – Communal development and multiple occupation
DM28 – Encouraging sustainable travel
DM30 – Access and highway safety
DM31 – Car parking and servicing
DM33 – Planning Obligations and development viability

Other Material Considerations

- Written Ministerial Statement: Planning for Growth March 2011
- Localism Act 2011 – s143 Local Finance Considerations
- Interim statement on the off-site provision of affordable housing December 2011
- Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990:
Section 66 General duty as respects listed buildings in exercise of planning functions
Section 72 General duty as respects conservation areas in exercise of planning functions.
- The NPPF states that where a 5 year land supply cannot be demonstrated, applications for housing should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development and that relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up-to-date.

Since the Norwich Policy Area does not currently have a 5 year land supply, Local Plan policies for housing supply are not up-to-date. As a result the NPPF requires planning permission to be granted unless:

"Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits ... or Specific policies in the NPPF indicate development should be restricted".

Principle of Development

Policy Considerations

19. 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 on St Giles. Residential use would be compatible with the mixed use character of the area and approved and existing densities of housing development. The re-use of land is encouraged by the NPPF and local policies HOU13 and HOU18. As such the scheme accords with local and national policies for development and re-use of land and is considered to be an appropriate and preferred alternative use for the site.
20. The principle of providing for a potential increase in dwellings on this site is acceptable and will help meet the housing needs within Norwich. As set out above as Norwich does not have a 5 year land supply, policies directly relating to housing within the local plan have no weight. As such the main issues in assessing any future application on the site are the impact upon heritage assets within the area, design, living conditions of future and existing residents, parking and servicing. These are addressed below.

Affordable Housing

21. In terms of providing affordable housing, negotiation on scheme viability is acceptable as part of the policy and reflects current economic circumstances; however, the aim would still be to maintain a % provision of units on site.
22. Viability information and sales costs assessment was submitted with the initial proposal and whilst the original proposal for 20 units would require 33% to be affordable dwellings, as the scheme is now reduced to 4 units requiring planning permission then policy 4 of the JCS would not be triggered and no affordable housing is required in this instance.

Impact on Living Conditions

Overshadowing, Overbearing Nature of Development

23. The application has been scaled down considerably with now only two main additions to the roof area. These are the change to the roof at the front and addition to the roof of the south-east corner rear wing. The bulk of extensions now proposed are not considered to result in any significant overshadowing of adjacent residential properties. The roof additions are at some distance from neighbouring properties and do not result in alterations at the rear which are higher than the existing mansard roof. The front roof height is increased but is designed with hipped ends and appropriate roof pitch to limit the amenity and visual impacts of the alteration. The resulting built forms would not therefore result in an overbearing or over dominant form of development.

Overlooking, Noise and Disturbance

24. The proposal includes a number of dormer windows to the new roof additions and also dormer and enlarged or additional windows to the walls of the rear building. The enlarged/additional windows are for the existing permitted 18 dwellings under the prior approval application mentioned above. Those on the main east and west facing walls include some with balconies at ground and first floor levels. With the exception of the rear wall of the building in many cases the new windows will replace existing windows of similar size and/or location.
25. Existing residential properties are located above the public house at No 51; to the west adjoining the cleared site at the rear of 59 Bethel Street; and to the south fronting Chapelfield North. Those to the west of the adjoining land back onto the site and whilst there is some opening looking through east to west the area is unlikely to be affected given the distance and potential further screening from new development when the adjoining land is redeveloped. Those new windows facing the rear of No 51 look out over the rear of single storey buildings or the larger garage building to the south. Those dormers facing north will look across the highway and will be part of an established separation space window to window across Bethel Street. The adjoining cleared land has received permission for a built form of dwellings running along its east boundary. The building layout there provides windows to stairways or bathrooms on its east side and so if built these houses as well as the other properties mentioned are unlikely to be affected in terms of noise, overlooking or outlook.
26. The nature of occupation is likely to involve different sizes of flats and value of

property. However; the control on who would buy or occupy these flats is not a planning matter and control of noisy neighbours would be undertaken by other statutory powers. The density of development is akin to similar inner City locations. The new residents would have some external space for activities or storage but this is screened by a side wall and of sufficient size to enable a distribution of use of the space without particular activities needing to be unduly focused close to existing residential properties in such a manner that would be likely to cause nuisance. New residents would also benefit from use of Chapelfield Gardens or other parts of the city centre for amenity purposes which are within a short distance from the site.

27. Main impacts will be from those additional windows to the rear of the site which includes windows and dormers facing south and similar provision to the rear extension facing west. Occupants at 11 and 12 Chapelfield North and others have expressed concern about overlooking and disturbance. No 11 is relatively well screened except for upper floor and dormer rooms and the effect to windows at lower levels will be from the side of Aldwych House which, as described above, new side windows would be at some distance and set at an angle to enable any significant disturbance or overlooking. The rear of 11 faces down the side alley with views east obscured by the bulk of existing extensions at the rear of No 11/12.
28. At present there are a few small windows to offices which face south and west looking over the car park and rear of Nos 11 and 12. The numbers of windows are increased in the proposal and dormer windows introduced to the existing and new rear mansard roof. The original proposal included a larger number of openings and balconies for some of these openings. The scheme and size of openings have been scaled back and any impacts now would be from first and second floor openings with those at ground floor effectively enclosed and obscured within the adjoining courtyard space.
29. From the submitted drawings the closest point of the proposed windows is approximately 16.5m facing south and 15.5m facing west to the outside corner point of the garden at No 12. Those which do face west are not looking straight out at the garden or house but again are set at an angle, the distance here closest proposed window to rear wall at No 12 would be approximately 19.4m shortest distance and 24.4m longest distance into the house corner of the rear yard. Those windows set higher would be at some slight increased distance due to the angle upwards when considering impacts of people looking down into ground floor spaces. South facing windows look more directly back to back with No 12 and to some extent No 11 and 13. The closest distance window to mid-point of rear wall to No 12 is approximately 25.2m.
30. Whilst the new development will be noticeable to existing residents due to the change in nature of use and alterations to the building at their rear the distances between properties and the decreased window sizes and building heights now proposed should mean that any impact is considerably reduced from that initially proposed. The removal of balconies will also help reduce noticeable activity within new flats and potential for disturbance or overlooking. The distances between properties could be considered generous for a central location and the direct minimal distance back to back of approximately 25m would be comparable to other approved lower density development. As such the revised scheme is not

considered to result in an adverse impact on residential amenities in the area.

31. The bin storage is shown within a fenced area towards the back of the site. This is moved away from the rear boundary and landscape shown to separate spaces between the side courtyard of Aldwych House and rear of No 12 Chapelfield North. Whilst there is a long travel distance for bins to Bethel Street, service providers for bin collection have confirmed that the distance is acceptable for collections and whilst there could be some noise from this activity this is likely to happen infrequently and during the daytime when other background noise will further screen any noise impacts. It should be noted that storage in this area could be provided without further permission for use by the 18 flats. The use of the space by 4 extra flats is not likely to result in such a noticeable increase in activity to cause disturbance, noise or smell in the area above that which could take place. Details of the bin store; however, could be required by condition to ensure a suitably designed enclosed facility is provided to help lessen any possible impacts in the interests of amenities.

Design, scale, form and height and Impacts on Heritage assets

32. Both the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act and the NPPF attach significant importance to the conservation of historic assets and require decision makers to have special regard both to the desirability of preserving listed building and their settings and the character or appearance of conservation areas.
33. The NPPF recognises the protection and enhancement of the historic environment as an important element of sustainable development and establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development in the planning system (para 6, 7 and 14). The NPPF also states that the significance of listed buildings and conservation areas can be harmed or lost by alterations to them or by development in their setting (paragraph 132). Furthermore, para 137 states that proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to, or better reveal the significance of heritage assets should be treated favourably.
34. Saved Replacement Plan Policies HBE8 and HBE9 and emerging Policy DM9 require all development to have regard to the historic environment and maximise opportunities to preserve, enhance, or better reveal the significance of designated assets. In assessing this application there are a number of heritage assets to consider including: the heritage value of the building proposed for conversion; the listed buildings in the immediate area principally 49, 51 and 59 Bethel Street and their settings; listed buildings and buildings of townscape value to the north of Bethel Street and their settings; adjacent listed buildings at the rear of 12 and 13 Chapelfield North and their settings and the City Centre Conservation area and St Giles character area.
35. The frontage brick building to Bethel Street is simply detailed and two storeys in height and identified as having a positive frontage within the conservation area. It has a simple pitched roof which links to or partially conceals the upper floor of the building extending behind. The rear building is simpler and of no real architectural merit it being provided in the 1960's and converted and additional roof element added in the early 1970's.

36. The initial scheme proposed the extension upwards of walls and new mansard roof to the whole building. The frontage building was shown as rendered and all existing window and door details removed. These changes taken individually or as a whole were considered to have a significant adverse impact on the area and the scheme was subsequently amended to take into account comments made to the agent. The front building now retains door openings, window detail, eaves detail and facing brickwork.
37. The main alteration is to the roof which is increased in pitch to accommodate additional flats but retains hipped ends and is provided with dormer or velux windows which reflects similar new development on the north side of Bethel Street. The existing stair well is set back from the street and is shown to be retained but over clad. Other changes to window openings are more minor. The scheme retains the main height of the façade and whilst the roof is altered the effect of the site frontage and stepping of height of frontage buildings east to west and setting of adjacent listed buildings and their contribution to and importance of the street frontage are retained. Conditions are suggested in terms of agreeing suitable facing materials, joinery details etc. As such this part of the development is considered, in the context of the NPPF, to result in less than substantial harm.
38. Alterations to the remainder of the building include new windows to the side and rear elevations, increase in the roof area to accommodate 2 additional flats on the south east corner of the building, removal of part of the rear tower and excavation of part of the rear curtilage to allow windows to the rear ground floor area. In terms of the placement of new openings and increase in roof height these relate acceptably to the proportions and design of the building elevations.
39. The rear part of the building is to be rendered. Given that there will be a number of alterations and part removal of existing features this treatment is considered to be acceptable and will more effectively disguise any changes to the exterior of the building. Render is a material used in the area and will create a simple form for the building and whilst the finish will weather off this should not be to the detriment of the character of the area and more likely to result in a subtle blending of buildings over time.
40. The rear roof alteration retains the line of the end gable with a simple string detail added to define the roof element and the side parts designed to pull through the angle of the existing mansard roof plane north-south. Alterations to form a mansard on the end gable would cause difficulty in maintaining the stair access in the corner of the building and as such further change to the design has not been pursued further. However; the overall design approach is intended both to be sustainable and low impact, allowing the listed buildings fronting Chapelfield to be seen as the original main focus of views and minimising the visual impact of the alterations as viewed from the car park and between the gate entrance. In this regard the Council's Conservation and Design officer considers the design approach to be successful and again subject to suggested conditions on materials etc.
41. The alterations to form additional flats as well as those to improve window openings to those flats allowed under permitted development will create a residential scheme in line with the general character of the area and similar in numbers and density to

that approved for the adjoining site to the west and other nearby development. The changes will not alter the character of the adjacent car parking area or conservation area to any significant degree. Those buildings fronting Chapelfield North are attractive buildings within a successful central City location. Whilst there will be some impacts arising from the use of the Aldwych House building this is unlikely to be to such an extent that the future use of the existing adjacent buildings is compromised. The quality of the area to live or work should not be significantly altered by the proposals. On the basis of the above considerations the proposed alterations are not considered detrimental to the listed buildings or their setting nor long-term viability.

Transport and Access

Access and Servicing

42. Bin storage is provided to the side of the building towards the rear of the site. Whilst there is a long travel distance for bins to Bethel Street service providers for bin collection have confirmed that the distance is acceptable for collections and the site is relatively level to ensure safe access. Bins would reasonably be required to be incorporated with provision for the 18 other flats using larger communal euro bins. A relatively large enclosed storage space is shown and final confirmation for the split in bin types and sizes and final design of the enclosure is suggested as a condition to ensure suitable provision on site.

Cycle and Car Parking

43. The highways officer has confirmed that the proposed development is suitable in transportation terms for its central location. No on-site parking is proposed which given the central location of the site would be acceptable and help encourage car free housing development within a highly accessible area. The properties would not be entitled to parking permits and an informative to this effect is suggested for inclusion on any permission. Adequate space is available to the side of the site for secure and covered bike storage. Confirmation for the final location and design of stores is suggested as a condition to again ensure suitable provision on site.

Environmental Issues

Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, Water Conservation

44. The reduced size of the development to 4 units means that it is now below the threshold for an energy efficiency statement or for energy production facilities being required under policy 3 of the JCS. Whilst some specific details on energy efficiency have been provided within the design these are welcome but not required by policy and therefore no specific conditions are suggested for these elements. Policy 3 also has a requirement for all housing developments to achieve code level 4 for water to maximise water efficiency. The developer appears prepared to investigate and meet this requirement which could be covered by imposition of condition.

Archaeology

45. The works are mostly above ground; however, a small area of the rear car park will be lowered slightly and drainage works undertaken. Whilst it is unlikely, given the extent of alteration in the 1960's, that there will be evidence of archaeological remains within this area the agent has indicated that they would be happy for a watching brief condition to be imposed to observe works and record any finds.

Landscaping

Replacement Planting

46. The main outside space for the scheme is to the west side of the building. This will be primarily hard surfaced but a planted landscape space is also shown to be provided on the south side of this area adjoining the boundary to No 12. This provides some softening to the space and a green separation between gardens which will provide amenity benefits for the area. A condition is suggested to require details of the hard and soft landscaping to be agreed.

Biodiversity

47. The natural areas officer has confirmed that the comments received regarding the presence of foraging bats in this area are correct including bats foraging for insects in Chapelfield Gardens. In view of this, recommendations regarding bats are supported, especially regarding the adoption of a more precautionary approach to any demolition or alteration works to be undertaken as the possibility of bats roosting within Aldwych House may be greater than originally thought. An informative is therefore suggested in terms of wildlife protection.

48. The addition of planting could provide some ecological benefits depending on plant species proposed. In addition provision of house sparrow and swift nesting boxes in the new development would also be worthwhile enhancements as these birds are, respectively, red and amber list species that have lost many of their traditional nest sites due to building demolition and renovation. Requirement for such enhancements are suggested for inclusion within the proposed landscape condition.

Local Finance Considerations

49. 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 minor 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
Council Tax	Yes	Band not yet known
Community Infrastructure Levy	Yes	£75 per square metre

Conclusions

50. It is considered that the proposal constitutes sustainable development. An existing building will be re-used and extended to create new dwellings in a location where the future occupiers will enjoy both good amenity levels and be within a convenient

accessible distance of a full range of facilities and services. The impact of the development on designated heritage assets has been fully assessed. It is considered that the development responds positively to the constraints of the site and that the relevant heritage assets and their settings will be substantially preserved. The development has been designed to minimise impact on adjoining neighbours. The dwelling will make a minor positive contribution to addressing the existing shortfall in the 5 year housing land supply. The development is therefore 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.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To approve Application No 14/00630/F Aldwych House, 57 Bethel Street Norwich NR2 1NR 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 facing and roofing materials; external decoration to render, joinery and metalwork; eaves and verges; joinery; roof lights; external lighting;
4. Details of cycle storage, bin stores provision;
5. Details of landscaping, planting, biodiversity enhancements, site treatment works, boundary treatments, gates, walls and fences and landscape maintenance;
6. Details of water efficiency measures;
7. Details of external flues, background and mechanical ventilation, service routes, soil/vent pipes and their exits to the open air;
8. Archaeological site monitoring.

Informatives

1. CIL
2. Considerate Constructors
3. Asbestos
4. Protection of wildlife
5. Refuse and recycling bins
6. Parking permits
7. Address naming and numbering

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, following negotiations with the applicant and subsequent amendments at the application stage the application has been approved for the reasons outlined within the Officers committee report with the application.