

Report to Planning applications committee
Date 6 December 2012
Report of Head of planning services
Subject 12/01873/F Maybank 8 Poplar Avenue Norwich NR4 7LB

Item
6(5)

SUMMARY

Description:	Installation of mini treatment tank drainage system.
Reason for consideration at Committee:	Objection
Recommendation:	Approve
Ward:	Eaton
Contact Officer:	Jo Hobbs Planner 01603 212526
Valid Date:	7th November 2012
Applicant:	Mr E Strachan
Agent:	Mr Kevin Cole

INTRODUCTION

The Site

Location and Context

1. The site is located on Poplar Avenue in the Eaton ward. The area is predominantly residential and the site itself is located at the end of a cul-de-sac off Newmarket Road.
2. The dwelling is a detached two storey dwelling set in a fairly spacious garden. There are mature trees and vegetation along the SW and NE boundaries.
3. The site slopes down significantly from the south east to the north west of the site, as the site is on the edge of the River Wensum valley.

Planning History

4. Planning permission was granted for a rear two storey extension in 2010 and with a revised design in 2011 (11/01132/F). The two storey extension was being built at the time of the site visit for this application.

Equality and Diversity Issues

5. There are no significant equality or diversity issues.

The Proposal

6. The application is to install a mini treatment plant in the rear garden to treat all foul water drainage from the site. Surface water from drains is dealt with through existing soakaways on the site.

7. The mini treatment plant would be entirely underground and sealed, with only an inspection cover visible on the surface. The plant would only produce clear water which would drain into the surrounding soil through perforated underground pipes.
8. The plant is required to address an existing sewerage problem that was created when the dwelling was first built. The existing sewer pipes are located above ground. This was most likely due to the fact when the development was built in the 1930s plots of land were purchased and built out in a form of ribbon development along the road.
9. The main sewer pipe runs through the front gardens of dwellings along Poplar Avenue. This would have been set down in the ground deep enough for the development at 1 Poplar Avenue. However due to the required fall of 1:80 in the sewer pipe, the pipe would be at a shallower point in the land by 8 Poplar Avenue. In this instance the invert for the sewer connection is above the ground floor level of 8 Poplar Avenue.
10. Due to the pipes being out of the ground and above the ground floor level, in winter months pipes have frozen, become blocked and flowed back down the site and into the kitchen of the dwelling. This application seeks to rectify this existing issue.

Representations Received

11. Adjacent and neighbouring properties have been notified in writing. Three letters of representation have been received citing the issues as summarised in the table below.
- 12.

Issues Raised	Response
Potential smell	See paragraphs 24-26
Water logging from waste water	See paragraphs 27-29
Ground contamination	See paragraphs 24-26
Ongoing maintenance	See paragraph 30

Consultation Responses

13. Environment Agency – no objections subject to conditions
14. Environmental Health – no comments to make.
15. Anglian Water – no response received.

ASSESSMENT OF PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Relevant Planning Policies

National Planning Policy Framework:

Statement 10 – Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
Statement 11 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Relevant policies of the adopted East of England Plan Regional Spatial Strategy 2008

None

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

Policy 1 – Addressing climate change and protecting environmental assets

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

NE8 – Management of features of wildlife importance

EP22 – Protection of residential amenity

Supplementary Planning Documents and Guidance

Trees and Development (Adopted September 2007)

Other Material Considerations

Planning Circular 03/1999 – Planning requirement in respect of the use of non-mains sewerage

Principle of Development

Policy Considerations

16. There are two key considerations for the proposed mini treatment plant. The first is the justification for disconnecting from the main sewers and secondly the impact the plant would have on the surrounding environment from smell and water drainage.

Principle

17. There is a general direction for new development to be served by mains sewers under planning circular 03/99. Although this circular relates to new development and this application is for the sewage treatment to an existing dwelling, the principles of justifying the disconnection are relevant to this case.
18. Under paragraph 6 of the circular requires a justification to be given for the proposal, and lists the grounds that may be acceptable. Ground c) identifies if there is a risk to public health or is likely to cause a nuisance then it may be justified.
19. The existing situation as seen on site has shown the current sewage disposal pipes and routes. There is potential for pipes to freeze, as has happened leading to subsequent back-ups into the house which would be of nuisance and danger to public health of the occupants of the dwelling.
20. The feasibility of connecting to the main sewer must therefore now be considered. As outlined in paragraphs 8 to 9 of this report the existing sewer connection is above the level of the ground floor rooms. To sink these pipes and sewer connection to beneath ground level would not be feasible as the main sewer in the front gardens of Poplar Avenue is already not that far beneath the ground surface.
21. To sink this down to a depth that would enable all sewer pipes to be underground and to create the correct slope of the pipe to enable sewage to drain down into the main sewer, a significant number of properties would have to have the existing sewer pipe excavated and re-laid at a deeper depth along Poplar Avenue. This would be an extremely extensive undertaking and be reliant on all landowners agreeing to the works.
22. It is therefore considered acceptable in principle to accept the provision of non-mains sewage disposal, provided that there are no adverse impacts on neighbours or the environment.

Impact of development

23. The waste products and smell from the treatment plant must be considered in relation to the surrounding environment and neighbouring amenity.

Disturbance to neighbours

24. The unit is sealed with only an inspection chamber cover visible on the ground surface. Within the unit a settlement tank enables the accumulation of sludge which is removed periodically. The only other by-product from the system is filtered waste water that drains into underground soakaway pipes. The unit is hermetically sealed preventing any odours from the unit.
25. The existing sewerage situation is a key consideration in the determination of this planning application. There is an existing problem that leads to sewage backing up into the residential dwelling. The over-ground installation of the sewage pipes already leads to a potential for odours.
26. The proposed mini treatment plant would provide an improved longer term sewage disposal system for the house, which is considered to be the only feasible option given the topography of the existing house and sewer connections.

Water drainage

27. Building Control have been involved in the pre-application discussions for the proposals. It has been suggested that only 8m of perforated soakaway pipes are required for adequate dispersal of the waste water from the plant. The rear garden is of a significant size to enable adequate water dispersal without this water entering the adjoining neighbouring gardens.
28. Following ground condition investigations it has been determined that the soil in the rear garden is predominantly sandy gravel which enables the adequate water drainage. The water logging of the ground or neighbouring properties is therefore not considered to be likely.
29. Rainwater is already disposed via soakaways on the site. The mini treatment plant would not be required to deal with rainwater, only foul sewage from the dwelling. Therefore at times of adverse weather conditions the treatment plant would not be inundated.

Maintenance

30. The maintenance of the mini treatment plant is recommended to be conditioned to ensure the unit remains in good working order.

Conclusions

31. The general provisions of planning circular 03/99 are for mains sewer connections to be used where possible. In this instance however an unacceptable sewer arrangement was installed in the original property in the 1930s. This application seeks to rectify this issue with no adverse impacts to the amenity of the surrounding neighbours or natural environment. A condition is recommended that the unit is maintained in accordance with the manufacturer guidelines.
32. It is considered that the mini treatment plant would improve the existing sewage disposal from 8 Poplar Avenue, which on balance is considered to be acceptable. The proposal will not have a significant adverse impact on the amenities of the immediate neighbours or the wider area, by virtue of the fact the plant would lead to minimal odours with waste water dispersing into the existing large rear garden adequately. As such the proposal accords with the criteria set out within policies NE8 and EP22 of the City of Norwich Replacement Local Plan and policy 1 of the Joint Core Strategy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

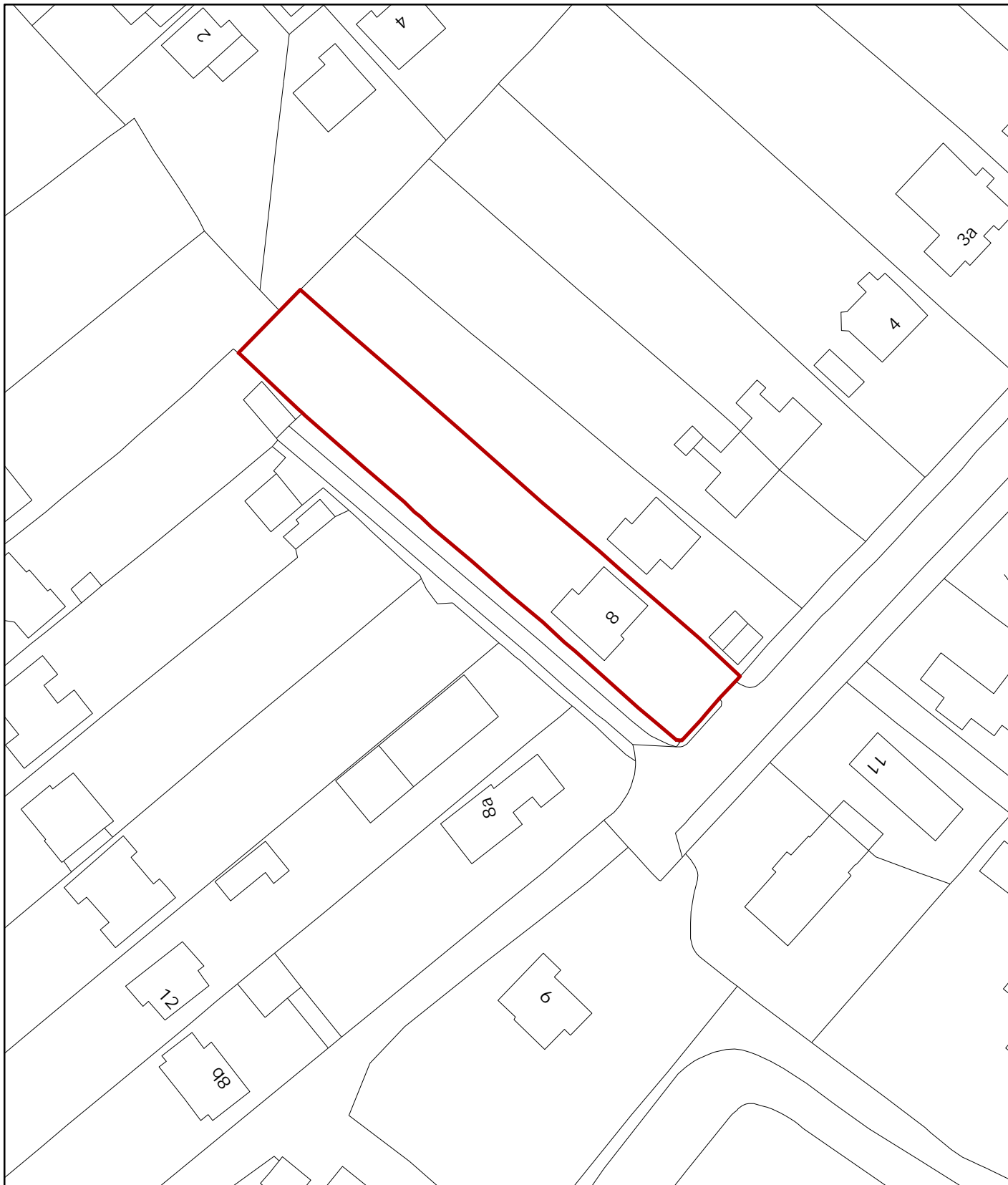
To approve Application No (12/01873/F at 8 Poplar Avenue) and grant planning permission, subject to the following conditions:-

- 1) Standard time limit
- 2) In accordance with plans
- 3) Maintenance in accordance with manufacturer guidelines

(Reasons for approval: The decision is made with regard to policies NE8 and EP22 of the City of Norwich Replacement Local Plan Adopted Version November 2004, the adopted Joint Core Strategy March 2011 and all material considerations. The mini treatment plant would improve the existing sewage disposal from 8 Poplar Avenue and will not have a significant adverse impact on the amenities of the immediate neighbours or the wider area, by virtue of the fact the plant would lead to minimal odours with waste water dispersing into the existing large rear garden adequately.

Informative Note:

1) To discharge treated sewage effluent into surface water or to ground may require an Environmental Permit from the Environment Agency. In some cases you may be able to register an exemption. The granting of planning permission does not guarantee the granting of a permit under the Environmental Permitting Regulations 2010. A permit will be granted where the risk to the environment is acceptable.)



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Planning Application No 12/01873/F

Site Address Maybank 8 Poplar Avenue

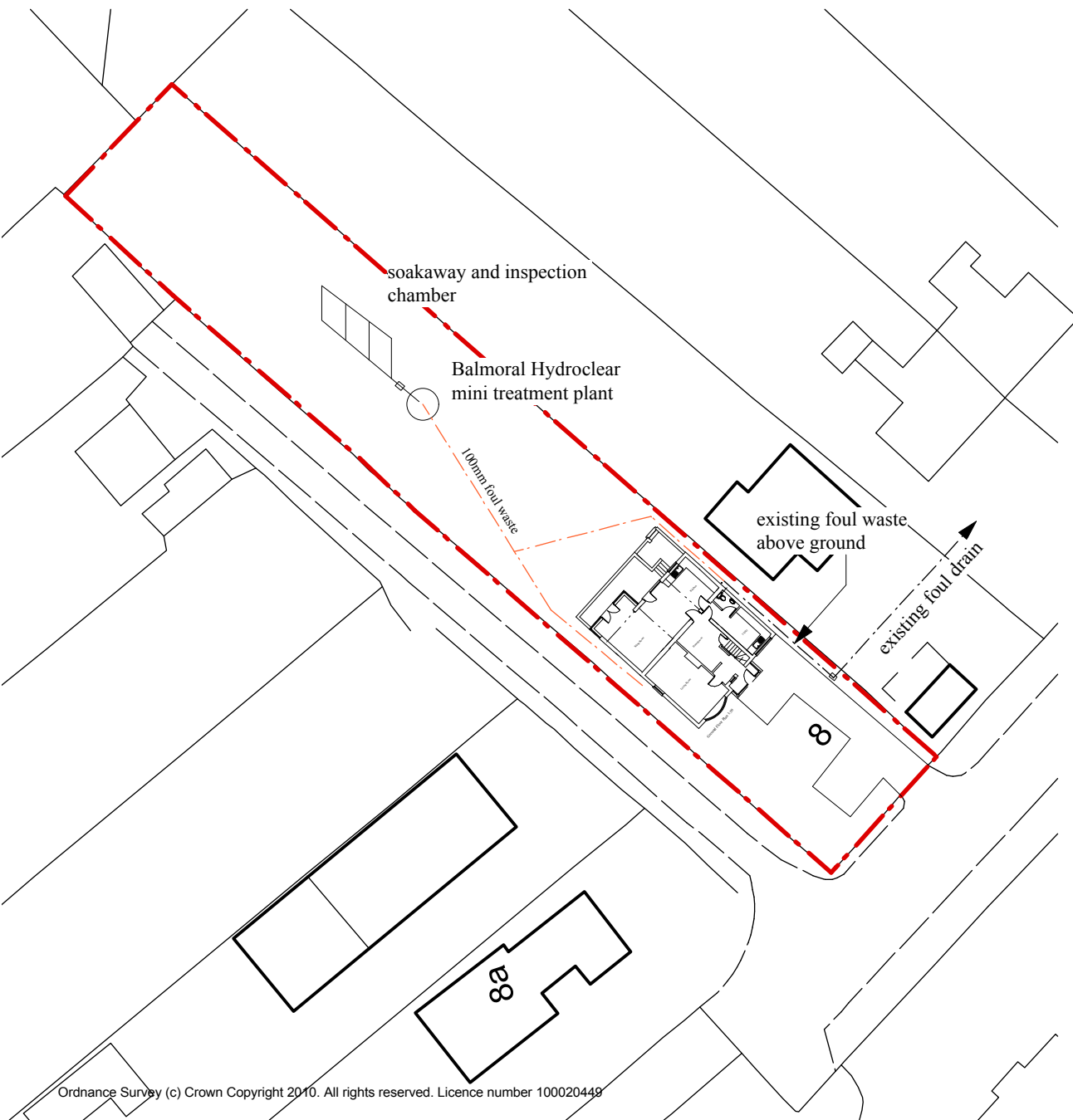
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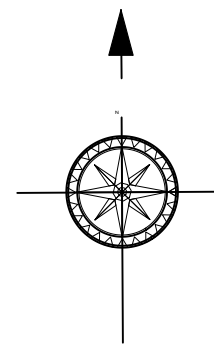




Block Plan 1:500



Site Location Plan 1:1250



K J COLE BA (hons) ARCH DIP.TP MRTPI
 43 Park Lane
 Norwich
 NR2 3EP
 Tel 01603 491416
 Fax 01603 491416
 kjc@kcole.co.uk

Client
Mr E Strachan

Drawing Title
**8 Poplar Avenue
 Norwich**

Drainage

Date 13 09 12 Scale 1:500 1:1250 Ref

Job No.	Drawing No.	Rev
10/218	PL04	