

Report for Resolution

Report to Planning Applications Committee
Date 13th May 2010
Report of Head of Planning Services
Subject 09/01453/F Police Station Earlham Road Norwich NR2
3RH

Item
5(2)

SUMMARY

Description:	Demolition of existing Police facility and three houses and erection of new Police Operation Deployment Base and associated works (revised layout).
Reason for consideration at Committee:	Objection
Recommendation:	Approve
Ward:	University
Contact Officer:	Mr Lee Cook Senior Planner 01603 212536
Valid date:	16th December 2009
Applicant:	Norfolk Constabulary
Agent:	NPS South East Ltd

INTRODUCTION

The Site

Location and Context

1. The application relates to buildings to the south-east of the round-about junction of Earlham Road with the Outer Ring Road. These consist of 276 Earlham Road, a detached 5-bedroom dwelling, the existing Norfolk Constabulary Police Station (its western neighbour) and a pair of semi-detached dwellings fronting Colman Road. The site is set back from the Earlham Road Colman Road highway by a verge and tree line. The surrounding area is predominantly residential in use and character. The properties leading away from the site are semi-detached and generally within the townscape there is a mix of semi-detached and large detached dwellings
2. The land at the rear of the site, to the south, is partly linked to the gardens of properties on Colman Road or Lubbock Close. The rear of the Police Station is used for storage and other properties have rear gardens with a mix of trees and other landscape features. No. 276 is now in use as a Police rest area and storage space. Police parking takes place at the front of the site and sometimes on hard standings along the verge on this corner.

Constraints

3. Colman Road and Earlham Road to the west of the roundabout form part of the major road network (policy TRA18). The site falls within a predominantly residential area. Trees along the adjacent roadways are important landscape and amenity features in the area.

Topography

4. The site is relatively flat with a level and reasonably clear access onto Earlham Road, the verge and path being approximately 10m deep.

Planning History

03/00336/F - Side extension to provide disabled W.C. facilities. (APPR - 27/11/2003).

07/00215/F - Temporary standing for 5 years of a sectional building to house new locker room and changing facilities. (APPR - 16/04/2007). **07/00654/F** - Erection of a pre-fabricated metal garage. (APPR - 03/08/2007).

08/01036/U - Change of use from residential dwelling to Police rest room and storage facility. (Additional information submitted) (Temp APPR – 21/11/2008)

A personal planning permission was granted in this instance given the then uncertainty as to whether the police service would pursue or be able to provide a suitable solution for the wider site.

The Proposal

5. The demolition of existing Police facility and three houses and erection of new Police Operation Deployment Base and associated works (revised layout). The building will support the three safer neighbourhood teams for Norwich West Centre; Earlham/Marlpit/Larkman; and University/Eaton. The scheme also includes a facility for the ambulance service with office and 2 ambulance parking spaces to enable quick response operations from this site. The site is approximately 0.2 ha and the new building will provide 530m² of accommodation.
6. One of the existing houses to be demolished is covered by permission 08/01036/U for police use as detailed above. This use has been implemented. The permission at that time was considered having regard to the Constabulary's long term estates strategy which has reviewed requirements of renewal, replacement and improvement across their building stock and which has resulted in this current application for replacement buildings on Earlham Road.
7. Access is proposed via the existing point onto Earlham Road with an area of secure parking and 2 ambulance spaces at the rear of the building and 5 visitor parking spaces at the front. Landscaping is provided within the scheme as well as suggested tree protection measures for the trees retained within the site and those along the adjacent verge areas.

Representations Received

8. Adjacent and neighbouring properties have been notified in writing. 4 letters of representation have been received citing the issues as summarised in the table below.

Issues Raised	Response
There is insufficient visitor parking and despite proposals for yellow lines vehicles will park further along Earlham Road and	Paragraphs 9 and 26 to 29

cause parking problems, obstruction and damage to verges in the wider area.	
Bollards should be erected to protect verges	Paragraph 27
Insufficient staff vehicle parking space is provided which has caused problems for local residents from offset parking on Earlham Road and close to/on Hadley Drive in the past. Continued under-provision and on-street parking is likely to cause problems and accidents in the area	Paragraph 28

9. The application was re-advertised following revisions to the car parking layout and ambulance parking. No further comments were received from local residents.

Consultation Responses

10. Policy: There are two main policy issues with the proposed redevelopment of the above buildings to form a new police station. These are the loss of housing and the further development of the existing community facility. The concerns over loss of housing and further development of the existing community facility are considered to be met through the provision of a strengthened community facility. I therefore have no objection to the proposed development.
11. Environmental Health: Do not feel that any slight increase in activity is likely to have a significant effect on the amenity of the local residents. Possible that noise levels from 'blue light' activity may go down. The boundary treatments provide a decent 6 ft close boarded fence to minimise line of sight should be sufficient as general day to day outside operations are unlikely to be overly noisy. I do not have any ground contamination concerns as before the existing Police station and houses were built the area was just fields. Suggests conditions on plant and machinery and external lighting to ensure development is not prejudicial to amenity. Also suggests informative notes on Asbestos; site construction/demolition waste; dust suppression; and operation times during demolition and construction phases.
12. Transportation: No objections to the revised scheme.
13. Tree Officer: This should be satisfactory in tree protection terms as long as it is conditioned such that there is full compliance with the arboricultural documentation that forms part of the planning application. The revised drawing CD9776S 09-02 REV.1 for soft landscape provides the necessary level of detail to satisfy my previous concerns that no provision for the improvement of the below ground conditions beyond the tree pit specified. Where there is to be adjacent hard standing there should be a system of below ground improvement that extends below the hard standing but at the same time allows for the appropriate load bearing capabilities needed for the finished surface.
14. Conservation and Design: Requirement to meet the standards set in the 'Home Office Police Design Guide' means that the design of the building is slightly compromised. Comments made on the design pre-application not taken on board as they may not comply with the guidelines in this document. Concerns on Colman Road elevation. However, generally the building is well positioned and although the design of the building is dominant, this is probably appropriate for a Police Station and in this position on a main road and corner of a busy roundabout. Suggest that materials and landscaping are conditioned.

15. NC Architectural Liaison/Crime Reduction Officer: The complex is designed to meet the security standards of the “Home Office Police Design Guide” which will provide greater protection and reassurance for users and visitors to the building.

ASSESSMENT OF PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Relevant Planning Policies

Relevant National Planning Policies

- PPS1 Delivering Sustainable Development
PPG13 Transport
PPG24 Planning and Noise

Relevant Strategic Regional Planning Policies

East of England Plan 2008

- ENV7 Quality in the Built Environment
NR1 Norwich Key Centre for Development and Change
T8 Local Roads
WM6 Waste management in development

Relevant Local Plan Policies

City of Norwich Replacement Local Plan 2004

- AEC3 Loss of buildings for community use
EP22 Amenity
HBE12 High quality of design, with special attention to height, scale, massing and form
HBE19 Design for safety and security
HOU16 Loss of residential accommodation resisted
NE3 Tree protection, control of cutting, lopping etc
NE9 Landscaping
TRA5 Approach to design for vehicle movements and special needs
TRA6 Parking-standards maxima
TRA7 Cycle parking standards
TRA8 Servicing provision
TRA18 Major road network

Supplementary Planning Documents and Guidance

Trees and Development (Adopted - October 2007)

Principle of Development

Policy Considerations

16. The two main policy issues with the proposed redevelopment of the above buildings to form a new police station relate to the loss of housing and to the further expansion of the existing community facility. The proposal would result in the loss of 3 dwellings and the subsequent provision of expanded police community facilities. Although the loss of housing to other uses will generally be resisted, Local Plan policy HOU16 allows for circumstances where redevelopment would be beneficial to enhance community facilities or other benefits to the area. In order for this loss to be justified, however, the proposal must demonstrate that it either provides a community benefit that can not be achieved in any other way, or a regeneration purpose to benefit the character or economy of the area.
17. The redevelopment of the existing police facility seeks to provide improved policing facilities for the local area. At No. 276 this property was purchased by the police service as a means to enable the eventual redevelopment of the wider police station site under the Norfolk Constabulary Long Term Estates Plan. A need has been identified by the service and not providing the facilities is considered to be unacceptable to the Police Authority, leading to adverse impacts in other regards. The applicant has stated that the facility

would greatly enhance the operations of the existing police presence and the service its officers can provide. Direct community use would be enhanced as the building could now be used by general members of the public visiting the new police station.

18. The justification of how this site was chosen out of other alternative sites has been given and considering there is an existing police facility here the proposed development meets the criteria of policy HOU16. The site is not within a centre but it is an existing police station which is accessible through public transport and the site has been identified as being needed for community focussed policing in this area by the Police Authority. The further development of the existing police facility is therefore considered to be acceptable and additionally avoids any conflict with policy AEC3.

Impact on Living Conditions

19. The site layout has been assessed and comments made by environmental health. The Police Authority has undertaken pre-application consultation with neighbours and no objections have been received relating to amenity issues.

Noise and Disturbance

20. The main building will be located adjacent to the main road frontages and away from residential properties and the rear of the site will be laid out as an area of parking and servicing. Boundary fences will be provided at a height of 2 metres and boundary edges will be further enhanced by planting and by retention of existing trees in the south-east corner. Surfacing to the car park is also designed to reduce noise impacts. Some increase in activity is likely to take place but given the measures to reduce noise escape the development is unlikely to have a significant effect on the amenity of the local residents above that which is currently experienced by the police operations.
21. The site and neighbouring properties front onto a major route to/from the hospital and fire stations. With the inclusion of the ambulance service some additional potential exists for increased 'blue light' activity from the site. However; it is possible that noise levels from such activity may go down, as emergency vehicles are far less likely to be using their sirens as they manoeuvre at low speed from the site, than if they were passing through from elsewhere at high speed. As far as the boundary treatments are concerned the close boarded fence to minimise line of sight and noise should be sufficient as general day to day outside operations are unlikely to be overly noisy. Conditions are suggested on plant and machinery and external lighting to ensure these elements are also not prejudicial to amenity.

Overlooking and Loss of Privacy

22. The existing police station has approximately 36 staff using the site and further operations have recently moved into No. 276. The new building will house increased office accommodation at first floor level with the potential for increased staff throughout the day. To reduce any impact the building has been moved away from site boundaries; existing trees retained and additional boundary planting proposed to reduce any impacts from overlooking. The scheme overall, subject to conditions, should not therefore have an adverse impact on adjoining neighbours and the amenity of the area will be in the large part preserved.

Design

Form, Scale and Layout

23. Although the Design and Access Statement justifies the need for this facility in the proposed location, the requirement to meet the standards set in the 'Home Office Police Design Guide' means that the design of the building is slightly compromised. Most of the pre-application comments have not been taken on board as they do not comply with the guidelines in this document. The form and layout of the development moves the main building away from side boundaries and with the introduction of single storey storage

- buildings at both of its sides these both reduce any impacts on neighbours but also helps make a positive building statement consistent with the public face of the police operation.
24. The main design concern has related to the Colman Road elevation, where there is a 20+ metre blind elevation at ground floor level. However it is proposed that there now should be a landscaped strip of approximately 4m which might reduce the impact of this façade and the proposed use of different materials allows this rather long elevation to be vertically broken into three components, which is beneficial. A glazed entrance element also helps the building turn the corner of the site and provide a focus for members of the public when visiting the site.
 25. Generally the building is well positioned in order to adhere to established building lines and the height of the building relates to the surrounding two storey buildings. Although the design of the building is dominant, this is probably appropriate for a Police Station in this position on a main road and corner of a busy roundabout. The success of the building will be largely down to the detailing and the combination of materials used. It is therefore suggested that details of materials and joinery are conditioned, with samples being provided prior to the commencement of development.

Transport and Access

Car Parking and Vehicular Access

26. The site benefits from good public transport links as required by PPS1. In addition to there being no changes proposed to the vehicular access, the applicant has stated that no parking of operational police vehicles is proposed within the front curtilage of the site. Following concerns being expressed from local residents about the likelihood of verge parking taking place and under provision of public parking for what will be a more accessible and public facility 5 public spaces are shown at the front of the site. This provision will be partly screened by planting to retain a green frontage and so minimising the change to the residential character of this part of the street scene.
27. Traffic regulation orders are also in place to prevent parking on the highway verge and an extension to these has recently been proposed. An assessment of verge bollards has been requested to further reduce the potential impact on grass verges and street trees arising from vehicle parking and a suitable condition is suggested on this issue.
28. Service parking for the police and ambulances will take place behind a secure vehicle barrier fronting onto Earlham Road. Provision within the site will be for 18 cars, 4 motorcycles and 2 ambulances. Current parking provision is for 11 cars on site. The position of the barrier will be such that vehicles will be able to pull into the site and stop without blocking the highway. The parking here is envisaged to provide for a range of police operational vehicles rather than wholly for staff parking. No travel plan has been submitted with the scheme and it is envisaged that the police authority will need to actively manage parking within this area to prevent problems.

Servicing and Cycling Parking

29. Bin stores and service areas together with 16 secure staff cycle spaces are located within the site with access behind the secure vehicle barrier. These will be within the single storey buildings to the east and south of the site. 6 public cycle spaces are also provided at the front of the site adjacent to the main entrance. As such the access provision of car, cycle and servicing facilities is acceptable.

Trees and Landscaping

Loss of Trees or Impact on Trees

30. A number of existing trees which currently grow within the residential gardens of existing site buildings will be removed. However; trees along the southern boundary which account for the better specimens on site will be retained. The trees include 5 lime trees and 1 birch tree which are located in the south-east corner and their retention is advantageous as they

provide screening to adjoining residential properties and also provide good amenity and habitat value. An assessment has been made and measures suggested to also ensure the protection of important street trees along Earlham and Colman Roads. Tree protection measures are suggested by way of conditions.

Replacement Planting

31. A scheme of replacement planting has been proposed to replace site biomass and also to help provide acoustic and visual barriers along the boundaries of the site where they adjoin neighbouring residential properties or the frontage highways. The revised landscape drawing CD9776S 09-02 REV.1 for soft landscape provides the necessary level of detail to satisfy previous concerns that no provision for the improvement of the below ground conditions had been specified to ensure new or existing plant survival.

Conclusions

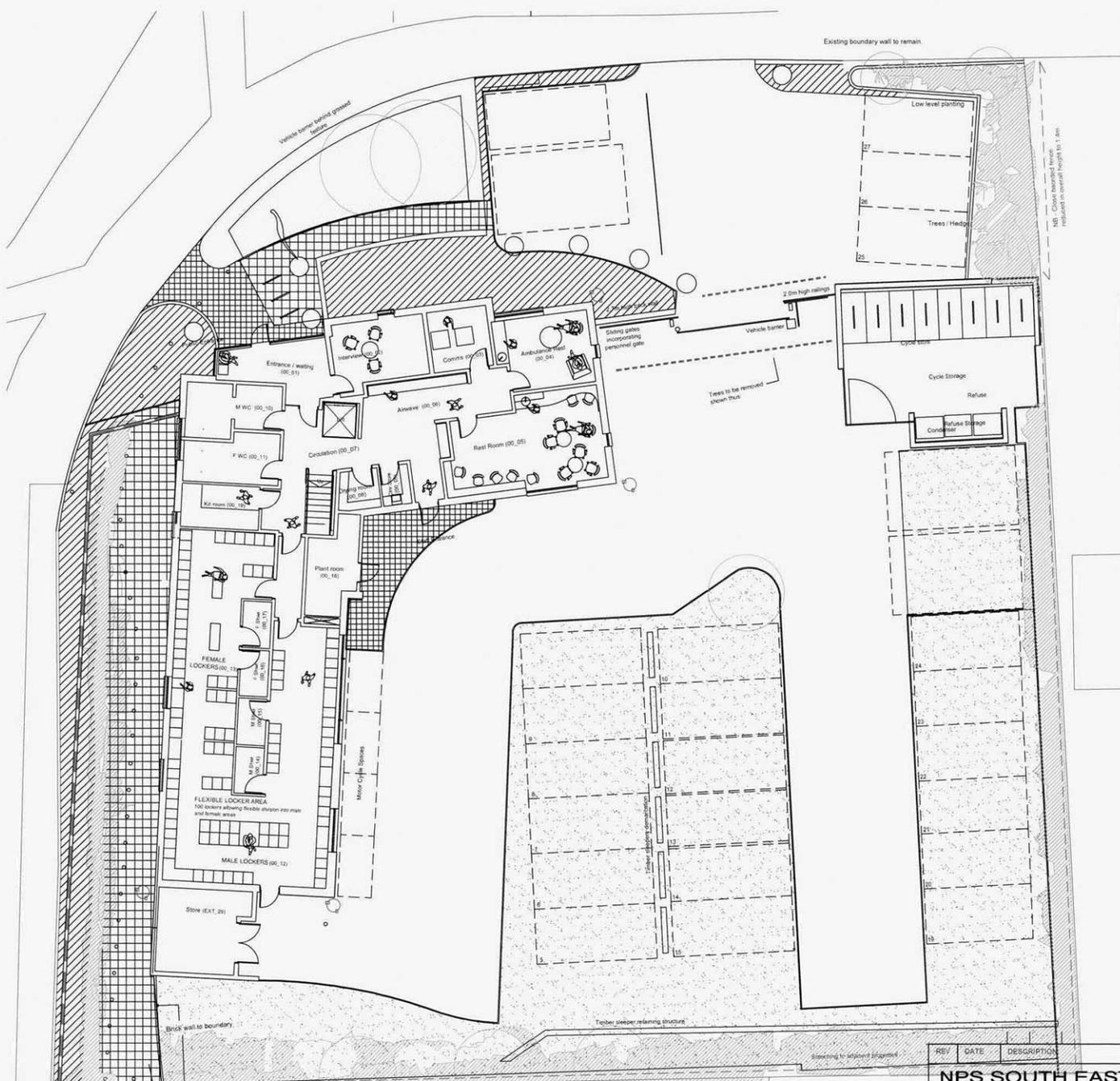
32. Despite causing the loss of residential accommodation, this proposal will provide for improved facilities for a public service, and subject to conditions, will have a minimal impact on the amenities of the surrounding area.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To approve Application No 09/01453/F Earlham Road, Norwich and grant planning permission, subject to the following conditions:-

1. Commencement of development within three years
2. Application drawings
3. Details of sample external materials; lighting; and joinery
4. Details of verge protection and bollards
5. Provision of car parking, cycle storage, bin stores
6. Provision of Boundary treatment, walls and fences
7. Use of public parking spaces
8. Details of Landscaping, planting and site treatment works
9. Landscape maintenance
10. Tree Protection Scheme prior to commencement
11. Retention of scheme for tree protection
12. Plant and machinery
13. Details of fume and flue

Reasons for approval: The redevelopment of this site to provide for an improved community facility and performance of police operations and estate rationalisation is sufficient to justify the loss of residential accommodation in this instance. The scheme has been designed having regard to residential amenity, landscape features and access arrangements in the area. The development would provide both an architectural and facility focus within the surrounding area and builds on the police presence on site. Site access remains and sufficient facilities are provided for parking and servicing. The proposed scheme, subject to conditions, would therefore represent an acceptable form of redevelopment and the proposals are therefore considered to comply with the relevant criteria of PPS1; PPG13 and PPG24 policies ENV7; NR1; T8 and WM6 East of England Plan 2008 and saved policies AEC3, EP22; HBE12; HBE19; HOU16; NE3; NE9; TRA5; TRA6; TRA7 and TRA8 of the City of Norwich Replacement Local Plan, Adopted Version, November 2004 and to all other material considerations.

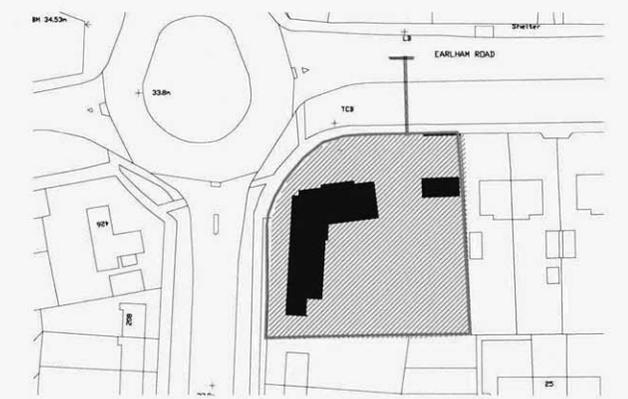


- White line markings
- Position of CCTV cameras.
- 1.8m close-boarded fence supported on concrete posts, with concrete gravel boards. Additional 600mm SW trellis above.

NOTE
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Drawing issue status:
 PRELIMINARY CLIENT APPROVAL PLANNING
 BUILDING REGS TENDERED CONSTRUCTION AS-BUILT



Site Location 1:1250

- Pedestrian / vehicle deterrent paving on permeable sub-base.
- Soft Landscaping - Synthetic grass / low level planting
- 600x600 Marshall's Conservation Paving
- 300x300 Marshall's Conservation Paving
- Re - cycled plastic ground reinforcement filled with gravel (Truck Pave by Hoofmark or similar)
- 800dia Anti-ram mounted Concrete Sphere
- 200dia Anti-ram steel bollards at 1200mm centres
- 600mm high treated timber rail supported on timber posts. (refer to landscape drawing)

Organisational Development
 12 MAR 2010
 Post Room
 Key Plan 1:400



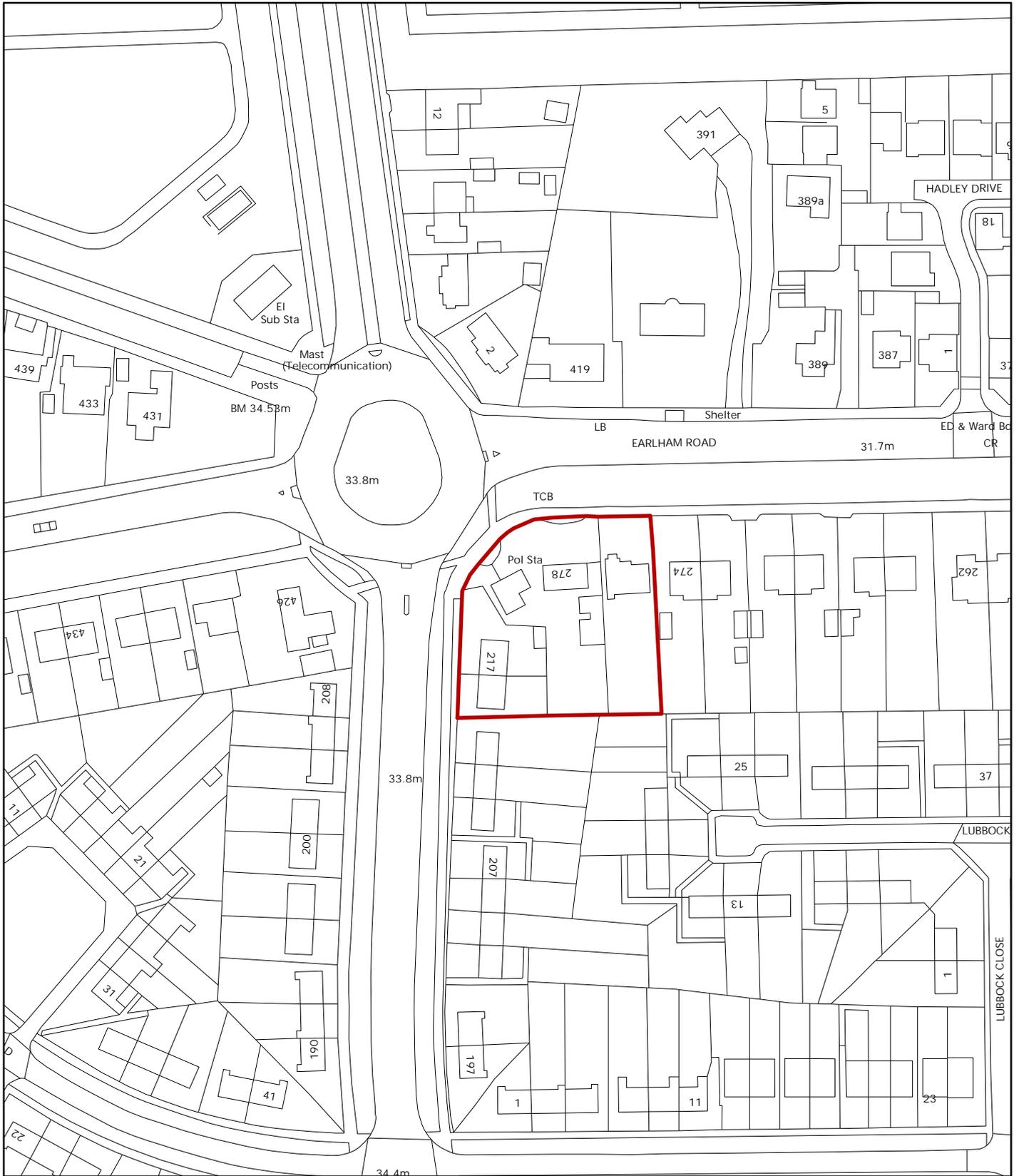
NB - This drawing is to be read in conjunction with the Landscape drawing, existign site and survey drawings.

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nps group

PI04	18.02.10	Revised Further to planning consultation	PI03	01.11.09	Revised Further to client comments
PI02	01.09.09	Revised Further to Planners Comments			
PROJECT	Earham Police Station Proposed re - development	CLIENT	Norfolk Constabulary		
SUBJECT	Proposed Site layout Site and Location Plan	DATABASE	DATE	SCALE	
			June 09	1:200 at A3 1:1250 at A3	
PROJECT NR	DRAWING NR	REV	DRAWN	CHECKED	
CD9776 S	(00)_05	P 04	and		

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Planning Application No - 09/01453/F
 Site Address - Police Station Earlham Road
 Scale - 1:1,250

