Report to	Planning applications committee Item	
	14 February 2018	
Report of	Head of planning services	4 / 1 \
Subject	Application no 18/01413/F 156 Thorpe Road, Norwich NR1 1TJ	4(h)
Reason for referral	Objections	

Ward:	Thorpe Hamlet
Case officer	Stephen Little - <u>stephenlittle@norwich.gov.uk</u>

Development proposal			
Erection of rear second storey extension to create 1 No. dwelling.			
Representations			
Object	Comment	Support	
3	0	0	

Main issues	Key considerations
1 Principle of development	Meeting housing need, suitability of location
2 Design, scale and heritage	The visual impact on neighbouring
	properties and the character of
	conservation area (CA)
3 Residential amenity	Loss of light and loss of privacy affecting
	neighbouring properties.
	Lack of amenity space for future occupants.
4 Access and Servicing	Adequacy of car parking & bin storage.
Expiry date	15 February 2018
Recommendation	To approve



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Planning Application No 18/01413/F 156 Thorpe Road

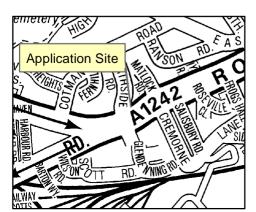
Site Address Scale

1:1,000





PLANNING SERVICES



The site and surroundings

- 1. The subject property is situated on the north side of Thorpe Road, 1km east of the city centre and within the Thorpe Ridge Conservation Area (CA).
- 2. Thorpe Road forms a busy arterial route into the city and is characterised by a mix of residential and office uses. The subject property is the second in a line of four red brick terraced properties, locally listed as a group. The property is 13m from the junction with Heathside Road to the west and opposite a large three-storey office block.
- 3. Number 156 Thorpe Road, the subject property, is part of a former police headquarters and is currently in use as four flats. To the rear of the building is a large single storey flat-roofed extension, reportedly in previous use as cells, covering the full width of the property to a total area of 131sq.m. The extension accommodates two single-storey flats to the rear. The rear section of the extension is 1.5m narrower than the main section adjoining the house. The section of roof toward the east corner of the extension, adjoining the main dwelling, is approximately 0.5m lower than the rest of the roof.
- 4. To the front of the house the flats are two-storey. All flats share a large central entrance to the front with a common entrance hall.
- 5. To the rear there are narrow areas around the dwelling, largely for access purposes, but little amenity space for exclusive use of the property. To the east of the current extension is a parking area, mostly of hardstanding, with spaces for up to 9 vehicles. 1.5m from the rear of the building is a retaining wall supporting a small area of overgrown green space which extends into the parking area. It incorporates mature trees including a large beech toward its eastern extent.
- 6. On the east boundary of the parking area and rear gardens is the side wall of no.162 which rises almost to the full height of that two-storey property and extends 11m further than the rear of no.160, from which it is 2m apart.
- 7. There is a small garden area to the front of no. 156, with two decorative columns and railings each side of the central entrance pathway. In front of this, and bordering the highway, is an open paved area, which currently accommodates bins and parking for two cars.
- 8. Adjoined to the southwest is the end-terrace, no.154, which has a garden area on two levels and a small two-storey rear extension on its southwest side (i.e. opposite to the subject property). The lower part of the garden area, closest to the house, is approximately 1.2m lower than the ground level of the extension to no.156, which extends along much of the boundary. Adjoining to the northeast is no.158 which has a small flat roof two-storey extension bordering no. 156. This extension and an alleyway 2m wide separate the rear extension of no.156 from the rear garden of no.158. The rear gardens of nos.158 and 160 are fenced and also set approximately 1.2m lower than the parking area at the rear of the terrace.
- 9. To the east and north of the properties, Heathside Road climbs steeply up Thorpe Ridge so that toward the rear of the properties it exceeds the height of the flat roof to the rear of no.156. Along the boundary with the road, there is a wall approximately 1.6m high and a higher section with a gate. On the opposite side of

Heathside Road are two-storey terraced houses and land rising beyond that to the west.

Constraints

- 10. Locally listed building.
- 11. Conservation Area (Policy DM9 Thorpe Ridge Conservation Area).
- 12. Description of nos.154-160 in Conservation Area appraisal reads: Nos 154-160 were built as the former Norfolk Constabulary Headquarters, converted to houses and flats during the 1990s. Dating from the 1920s the building displays features typical of the interwar institutional classical style, constructed of red brick, plain tiles, sash windows and stone door surrounds.

Ref	Proposal	Decision	Date
4/2000/0779	Extension to create new first floor flat.	REF	22/10/2000
4/2000/0656	Extension to create new first floor flat.	REF	07/09/2000
APP/G2625/A/ 01/1064212	Extension to create new first floor flat.	DISMISSED	22/8/2001

Relevant planning history

The proposal

- 13. The proposal is to construct a first floor extension, comprising a new flat, on top of the current rear ground floor section, covering 79sq.m or approximately 60% of the total flat roof area. It aligns with the northeast side of the extension, just over 2m from the garden of no.158 and 4.2m from no.154. It is 1m shorter than the ground floor extension allowing for a north-northwest facing balcony area.
- 14. It has a gable roof in two sections. Over what is currently the lower section of the roof, the eaves will be 2.3m higher than currently, with the pitch roof adding a total of 4.5m to the total height. Further to the rear (over what is currently the higher section of roof) the gable roof is reduced in height, adding 1.6m to the eaves height and 3.5m to the total height.
- 15. The side facing windows are all small roof lights approximately 2.3m from floor level. A balcony door and two standard sized windows face the rear. The balcony balustrade is stepped in from the side of the extension; by 1.4m on the side closest to nos.158 and 160, and by 0.4m on the side closest to no.154.
- 16. The plans have been revised to reduce the rear section of the extension. Formerly, the extension continued the higher ridge line of the roof to the rear, and the length of the extension matched that of the ground floor. The internal layout has also been changed, with the bedroom now to the rear.

Proposal	Key facts
Scale	
Total floorspace	60sq.m
No. of storeys	1 additional
Max. dimensions	4.5m high (7.5m high if ground floor included) 7.7m wide x 13.6m long (14.8m long incl balcony)
Appearance	
Materials	Red brick (to match existing); pantiles; painted timber Georgian style windows (existing are white plastic); black plastic rainwater goods and white fascias to match existing.

Representations Received

17. Advertised on site and in the press. Adjacent and neighbouring properties have been notified in writing. Three letters of representation have been received objecting to the original plans with three further representations, from the same addresses, objecting to the revised plans. The issues raises are summarised in the table below.

18.

Issues Raised	Response
 Loss of light to rear of neighbouring properties: Loss of direct sunlight and diffuse daylight to windows. What little light there currently is, during late afternoon from the west, will be blocked by the extension. There will be no direct sunlight at all during winter. Light is already reduced by mature trees to the rear and the need to construct fencing to prevent overlooking from no.156. Lack of light already causes damp issues, which would be worsened by the proposal. Proposal for light tunnels is an acknowledgment of lack of light to the rear of these properties. 	See main issue 3

Issues Raised	Response
Obstruction of views toward Georgian terraces and mature trees on Heathside road. Also, views of sky and trees obscured from low rear garden of no.154.	See main issue 3
Loss of privacy: overlooking from roof windows into neighbouring garden and windows, with specific reference to overlooking into bathroom window on neighbouring extension. Anyone viewing from windows would be unseen.	See main issue 3
No information received regarding a Party Wall Notice.	Not a material planning issue
Inadequate car parking to rear; parking already problematic. Inadequate space to turn, park and reverse only allows for five cars to park adjacent to gardens. The seven spaces as shown are impractical due to tight turning circle. Parking already overused and shared driveway to properties is often blocked, restricting views of oncoming traffic.	See main issue 4
Design fails to take account of character of surrounding terraces and conservation area. Terraces from 154 to 160 were built with retention of character in mind with mock Georgian windows to reflect those of surrounding properties. Existing ground floor extension is already out of keeping and this addition to it doesn't comply with the need to retain historical features to the rear.	See main issue 2
As referred to in the appraisal, this part of the Conservation Area is characterised by lower density housing. This would represent an over-intensification of site.	See main issue 1
Negative effect on value of houses.	Not a material planning issue
Disturbance from noise of construction.	No specific reason for concern
Over-dominant building: extension would represent an overbearing presence and encroachment onto personal space.	See main issues 2 & 3

Issues Raised	Response
Building has historical value, largely unchanged from former use as headquarters of Norfolk County Police. This change would degrade the integrity of the building and its context in the Conservation Area.	See main issue 2
Exacerbation of existing problems of noise, anti-social behaviour and smell of smoke from residents of flats, who are often resident for relatively short periods.	Not material planning issues
Noise disturbance and overlooking from proposed balcony.	See main issue 3
Similar applications refused in the past.	See main issues 2 & 3

Consultation responses

Transportation

- 19. Raised following issues:
 - the proposed layout does not function in terms of car parking layout (unusable spaces), suggesting that the parking spaces numbered 3 & 4 for the flats and the three spaces currently used by neighbours, all to the immediate rear of the gardens, can't be practically used as there is inadequate space to get in and out of the parking bays. It is questionable whether the dimensions of the proposed parking spaces are adequate;
 - there is no cycle parking.
- 20. Suggestions:
 - to remove earth bank, including mature tree, to the rear to ensure adequate space to get in and out of parking bays;
 - to make parking spaces to the front at right angles to the road and put the bin stores to each side of the front parking area.

Assessment of planning considerations

Relevant development plan policies

- 21. 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

• JCS4 Housing delivery

22. 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
- DM6 Protecting and enhancing the natural environment
- DM9 Safeguarding Norwich's heritage
- DM12 Ensuring well-planned housing development
- DM28 Encouraging sustainable travel
- DM30 Access and highway safety
- DM31 Car parking and servicing

Other material considerations

23. Relevant sections of the National Planning Policy Framework July 2018 (NPPF):

- NPPF2 Achieving sustainable development
- NPPF8 Promoting healthy and safe communities
- NPPF11 Making effective use of land
- NPPF12 Achieving well-designed places
- NPPF15 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
- NPPF16 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

24. Thorpe Ridge Conservation Area Appraisal

Case Assessment

25. 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

- 26. Key policies and NPPF paragraphs JCS4, DM12, NPPF paragraphs 11, 12, 14 91, 117-118, 122-123.
- 27. As this proposal results in the creation of one new dwelling, elements of national and local policy, which are strongly supportive of encouraging residential development in sustainable locations, have significant weight when balanced against potential negative impacts.
- 28. This location, on a bus route and within walking distance of the railway station and a good array of services, certainly qualifies as a sustainable location. It also maximises use of an already developed site.

29. While this implies support for the principle of a new dwelling in this location, local policy qualifies this by requiring that development should not detrimentally impact on the character and amenity of the surrounding area. Assessment of such impacts forms the subject of discussion below.

Main issue 2: Design, scale and heritage

- 30. Key policies and NPPF paragraphs JCS2, DM3, DM9, NPPF paragraphs 8, 127-131, 189-202.
- 31. The proposed extension, as it incorporates one dwelling and a gable roof, is relatively large for an extension to the rear of a terraced property. In terms of its scale, this has to considered both in the context of its appearance from the rear of neighbouring properties and the compatibility of an extension of this size within the context of the conservation area.
- 32. In terms of impact on the conservation area, the rear of these properties is visible from a short section of Heathside Road to the east, with a mature tree obscuring views from further north. The extension will block views toward the first floor Georgian-style windows of nos.158-160 and will make this section of road feel slightly less 'open'. This is a consideration given the attractive nature of these properties and specific reference to them and their historical use in the Conservation Area appraisal. However, the blank rear wall and large flat roof of no.156, as well as the existing flat roof two storey extensions on nos.154 & 158 significantly impact on the quality of this view. In particular, the large area of flat roof currently resembles an incongruous and visually-negative feature when viewed from this angle which, it could be argued, a gable-roofed feature would help to alleviate and make some architectural sense of. Further, there is nothing in the proposals which would prevent the historical use of the premises from being understood.
- 33. One other aspect which was mentioned in respect of the Conservation Area Appraisal is the characterisation of the area 'behind Thorpe Road' as 'lower in density and more suburban'. The addition of one flat does not significantly affect the density of the area as a whole and, though visually it may present an impression of higher density, it is closer to the intended meaning of the appraisal to understand the extension as an addition to a Thorpe Road property, a street defined as having a 'more urban density'.
- 34. The revised plans, which add visual interest to the originally more monolithic design as well as reduce its scale, have been significant in improving the acceptability of the scheme. Additionally, being wooden and with pane size to closely match neighbouring properties, the rear facing windows are suitably in keeping.
- 35. For the above reasons the proposals are acceptable in terms of design, scale and heritage impact.

Main issue 3: Amenity

36. Key policies and NPPF paragraphs – DM2, NPPF paragraphs 96 and 127.

37. The proposal has the potential to impact upon the amenity of neighbouring properties in a number of ways: over-bearing, loss of light, over-looking, and noise. The level of internal and external space will impact upon future occupants of the new property.

Over-bearing

- 38. A previous appeal (see history) was dismissed for a rear extension with one reason for refusal at appeal stage being that it would represent an overbearing presence for the rear of the property at no.154. To compare the extension with that previously proposed in 2000, the ridge height as proposed is slightly lower by 0.5m but, more significantly, the extension has moved away from no.154, with the roof ridge 8m distant from no.154 as opposed to 5.8m previously. And, although the eaves are higher at this side than that previously proposed, the extension is 2.5m further away. Given that the rear extension already has a wall approximately 4m in height on the boundary for the garden at no.154, the new position of the extension is not significantly harmful.
- 39. The extension will be visible from the ground floor windows of nos.158 and 160 and probably most noticeable in terms of impact when viewed from the low-lying gardens. Although the altered position of the extension takes it closer to no.158 the existing extension of that property, at least from the nearer ground floor windows, notably obscures the view of no.156 and, in conjunction with the alley, provides some sense of separation. From the nearest downstairs window of no.158, only a small part of the higher section of roof will be visible. Given the above, the scale of the extension is, on balance, not unacceptably dominant or overbearing.

Loss of light

- 40. Previous reasons for dismissal at appeal stage were that it would obstruct daylight to no.154, and there were additional concerns about overlooking from the previously proposed balcony.
- 41. As discussed above, the new proposals take the extension significantly further away from no.154 than was the case with the scheme that was appealed and consequently reduces the loss of light to that property. However, with the extension moving closer to nos.158 and 160, the potential for overshadowing to those dwellings needs to be carefully considered.
- 42. To first consider direct sunlight, the properties are north-northwest facing, which suggests that some sun currently reaching the rear of the properties toward the end of the day during summer months will be blocked by the extension. However, as currently, and due to the houses and steep rise in land toward the west, at many times of the year the sun is too low for even upper floor windows. And given the additional factor of the low level of the ground floor of the houses compared to the current single storey extension, any sunlight to ground floor living room windows is currently very limited. Overall, and given the low level of direct sunlight reaching the rear of these properties, it would be difficult to demonstrate direct overshadowing from the extension as a significant impact.
- 43. In terms of diffuse daylight, which also can include consideration of loss of outlook, it is the case that the rear of these properties has a relatively 'closed-in'

feel at the moment. This is not only from being north facing, but also due to the large beech and other mature trees, coupled with rising ground, to the rear and the high wall to the east. However, though previously loss of daylight to no.154 was considered a key factor, the splay of upward vision and extent of visible sky is less for the rear of no.154 than that experienced by nos.158 and 160, thus making the impact of the extension for the latter properties less acute. Also, from the nearest and most affected downstairs living room window in no.158, upward views in the direction of the subject property are already blocked by the existing two-storey extension. Even looking further away, the extension will only affect a relatively small angle of vertical vision when compared with that currently. From the garden, and in approximately terms, this would amount to 25 degrees out of a total 140 degrees of available visible sky. Overall, while in terms of both daylight and outlook the impact is arguably noticeable, in neither sense would it be considered unacceptable.

44. While loss of outlook has been considered, the loss of views of Heathside Road from nos.158 and 160 isn't a material planning concern.

Over-looking

45. To consider overlooking, the side-facing roof windows are over 3m above floor level. The balustrades of the balcony are set in further from the east side to reduce any potential for overlooking into nos.158 & 160. In respect of views from the balcony toward no.154, and in comparison with the proposal noted in the former appeal decision, the balcony has moved further away. With more wall and more extent of flat roof to block any potential views into the garden and lower windows of no.154, overlooking will not be material. It is also the case that the natural direction of view of anyone using the balcony will be away from the properties, and the additional amenity value which a balcony would represent for the occupant of the new flat, is enough to justify this feature.

Noise

46. There is no specific reason for noise from use of the balcony to be a material matter of concern and there is no reason to suspect this would be any greater than that normally experienced from a neighbouring garden.

Internal Space

47. Though the floor area has been reduced from the proposals as originally submitted, at 60sq.m (which includes all floor space where ceiling is above 2.1m) the revised area still remains above the national minimum standards of 39sq.m for 1bedroom/1 bed, or 50sq.m for 1 bedroom/2 beds.

Open space

48. The lack of amenity space for current and future occupants is certainly a matter to consider and relates to whether the flat represents an over-intensification of the site. Currently, the four flats don't have the level of outside space which would normally be expected. However, adding one more residential unit will not make a significant difference to the situation and the use of a balcony does help to address the shortfall.

49. It should also be mentioned that there are ample areas of public green space within walking distance of the property including Lion Wood, Woodrow Pilling Park and along the River Yare.

Main issue 4: Access and Servicing

- 50. Key policies and NPPF paragraphs DM28, DM31, NPPF section 9.
- 51. The main issue here relates to the usability of the current parking spaces. Policy would seek provision of one parking space per flat and, as the spaces have been laid out, there are seven spaces for use by the five flats of no.156. While it is true that the tight turning circle makes usability of some of the spaces to the rear questionable, particularly for a larger vehicle, even the loss of two spaces would still result in an acceptable level of parking provision. Even if, in that case, there could be an argument to reduce the number of spaces directly to the rear of the gardens to five or six, that would be a curious suggestion in the context of slightly increased residence and, rather than unnecessary involvement in the details of how cars choose to park, it is enough to suggest that, in line with minimum standards, the overall area of parking space is sufficient to service the properties.
- 52. The applicant has agreed that some cycle storage provision can be provided, probably adjacent to the green space to the rear of the ground floor extension. This will represent an improvement to the current situation and details of this will be conditioned.
- 53. The suggestion from Transportation that the earth bank and beech tree are lost in order to ease reversing in and out of the parking spaces would be a significant negative amenity and biodiversity impact and is not considered proportionate either to the nature of the problem or to the small increase in level of residency.
- 54. The bin store and parking arrangements at the front are not ideal and, in light of that, it was suggested by Transportation that the parking spaces are realigned to be directly either side of the central pathway and at right angles to the road. This, however, would almost certainly necessitate removal of the decorative columns and railings, thus representing a negative visual impact on the conservation area. It could also necessitate reversing onto the road.
- 55. Bins are currently stored to the east side of the parking area which is unsightly and can make for an untidy appearance. There may be cause to improve this, for instance by expanding the bin stores behind the railings, though that could present some collection issues and the addition of one more resident is unlikely to have a significant impact on the level of waste.
- 56. In short, access and servicing proposals, which maintain the current situation with the addition of cycle racks, are adequate to service an increase of one resident and are considered acceptable.

Equalities and diversity issues

57. There are no significant equality or diversity issues.

Local finance considerations

- 58. 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.
- 59. 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.
- 60. In this case local finance considerations are not considered to be material to the case.

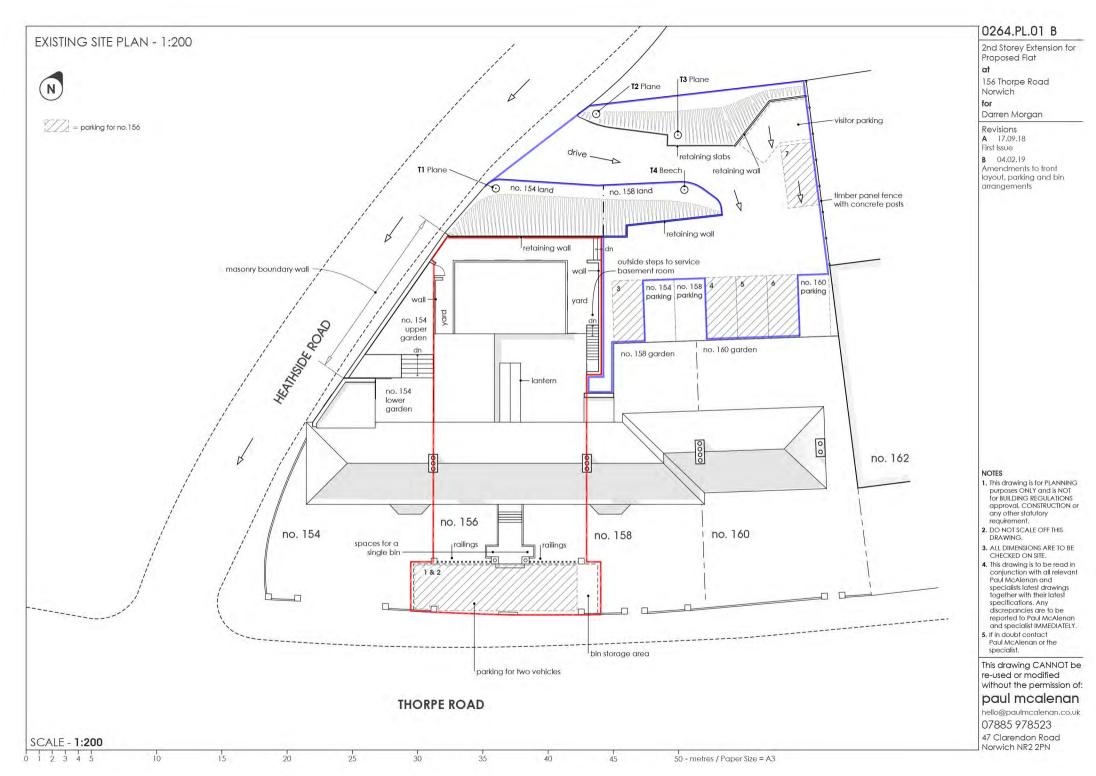
Conclusion

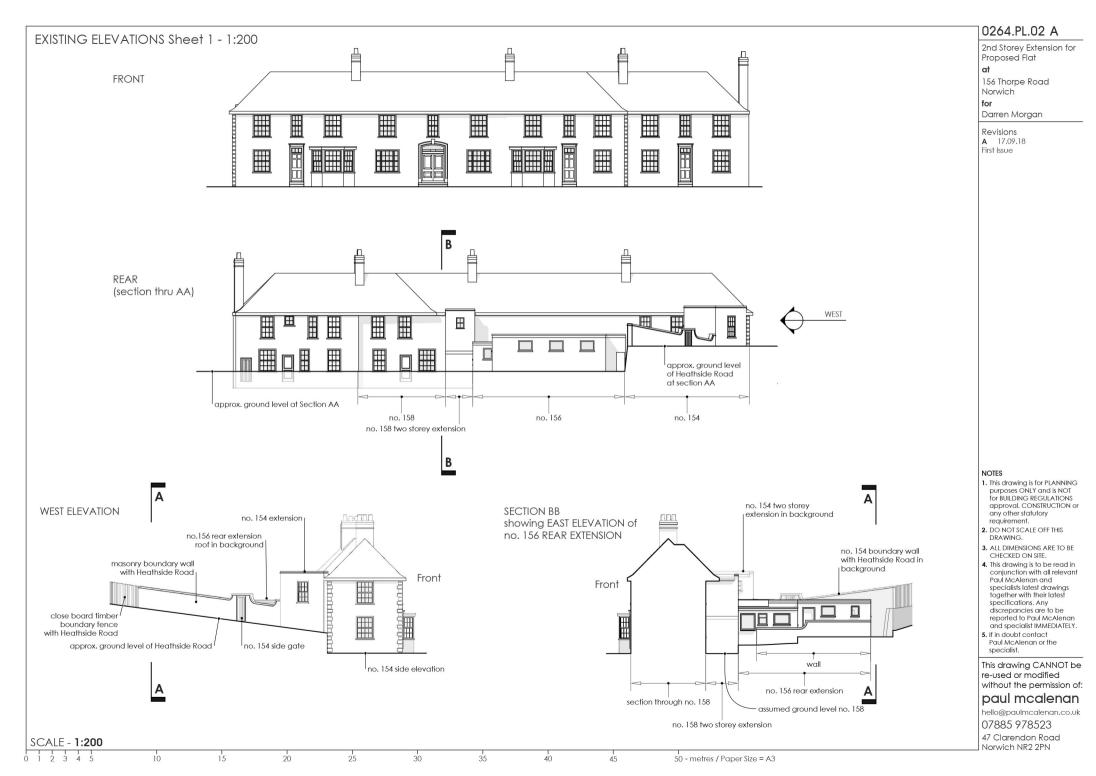
- 61. The previous refusals, and subsequent dismissal at appeal, highlight that there are aspects to this application which are finely balanced in terms of acceptability. In particular, its potential to be over-dominant to the rear area of neighbouring properties, which are of some conservation interest, relatively low-lying and limited in available light, is requiring of careful and detailed consideration both in terms of design and amenity. On balance, while impacts of a certain level are acknowledged, these are considered to be outweighed by the benefit of providing an extra residence in a location which, in terms of sustainability and making effective use of land, has some clear advantages. As such, and though a borderline decision, the development is considered acceptable.
- 62. 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. 18/01413/F – 156 Thorpe Road, Norwich NR1 1TJ and grant planning permission subject to the following conditions:

- 1. Standard time limit;
- 2. In accordance with plans;
- 3. Details of cycle provision.





EXISTING ELEVATIONS Sheet 2 - 1:200

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