

Report for Resolution

Report to Planning Applications Committee
Date 19th July 2012
Report of Head of Planning Services
Subject 12/00471/F & 12/00472/L Earlham Hall Earlham Road
Norwich NR4 7TJ

Item
5(4)

SUMMARY

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| Description: | Demolition of part of wall and formation of new vehicular link between the site entrance to the existing north car park, and the existing gravel area abutting the south elevation of the main building. |
| Reason for consideration at Committee: | Objection |
| Recommendation: | 1) Refer listed building consent (12/00472/L) to Secretary of State to seek authority to approve application contrary to English Heritage objection 2) Approve full application (12/00471/F) |
| Ward: | University |
| Contact Officer: | Jo Hobbs Planner 01603 212526 |
| Valid Date: | 1st March 2012 |
| Applicant: | Mr Andrew Burbidge - Estates Division |
| Agent: | Mr Andrew Burbidge - Estates Division |

INTRODUCTION

1. These applications have been brought to committee to seek approval to refer the above listed building consent application to the Secretary of State to seek authority to approve the application. As a second letter of representation has also been received the application is brought before Members for consideration and recommendation.
2. The full application will also be required to be sent to the Secretary of State for information. No objections have been received for the full application, but it is covered in this report as the proposals to remove part of the wall are the same for the listed building consent and the full application. The two applications are therefore intrinsically linked and so the full application is brought to Members at the same time as the listed building consent.

The Site

Location, Context and Constraints

3. Earlham Hall is a Grade II* listed building set in a conservation area on Earlham Road to the west of the city. The site is accessed off University Drive, which provides one of two main vehicle access points into the University of East Anglia.
4. Earlham Hall is separated into several distinct character areas which vary in age and in heritage importance. Earlham Hall and adjoining outbuildings including the bothy and north

and west courtyards form the core of the Grade II* listed building of Earlham Hall. Further to this there is the walled garden and former nursery site to the east and north east of the Hall, and other formal gardens to the north, west and south of the Hall that form and directly affect the setting of this listed building. There is also a former works depot to the east of the Hall alongside University Drive that is identified for redevelopment as an enterprise centre. Finally there is a car park to the north east of the Hall that is used by people visiting the wider Earlham Park grounds. The Hall is set within Earlham Park that forms a large area of open space to the north up to Earlham Road and to the south to the edge of the university campus.

5. Earlham Hall itself has been leased to the University of East Anglia since the 1960s whose campus lies directly to south. The hall is currently vacated however it was home to the University's School of Law. In 2010 the Hall was sold by the City Council to the UEA. The Hall is thought to originally date from C16-C17 but has been modified in several phases of remodelling, including extensive work to the south façade by Boardman in the early C20.
6. The surrounding parkland forms a historic park and is publicly accessible recreational open space, and contains designated woodland and river valley. The site is also within 100m of a designated gateway to the city under the City of Norwich Replacement Local Plan.

Planning History

7. There have been a number of planning applications on Earlham Hall for Full and Listed Building Consent applications. There have been no applications relating to the removal of parts of the wall in the north courtyard.
8. There is a current Full (12/00712/F) being considered for the refurbishment of the Hall amongst other external and internal alterations. The associated Listed Building Consent (12/00713/L) has been approved. One of the external alterations is for the removal of part of the wall in the north courtyard along the east elevation. This will be considered as part of these other application.

- 12/00712/F - Extensions and alterations to include:

- 1) Removal of more recent extension to east of Hall and construction of new entrance and foyer;
- 2) Change to landscaping in east courtyard to include access ramp and steps;
- 3) Removal of external fire escape staircase on west elevation; and
- 4) Removal of part of eastern wall in north courtyard to formation new route through north east area to link north and east courtyards. (Pending consideration at time of report being written)

- 12/00713/L - Refurbishment works including:

- 1) Removal of more recent extension to east of Hall and construction of new entrance and foyer on east elevation, and change to landscaping in east courtyard;
- 2) Formation of new route through north east area to link north and east courtyards;
- 3) Removal of external fire escape on west elevation;

- 4) Partial removal of floors at first and second floor;
- 5) Insertion of new internal fire escape stair and platform lift;
- 6) New WC facilities, services and fittings inside the Hall; and
- 7) General repairs and redecoration of Hall and buildings to south of the east courtyard.
(Approved 29/06/2012)

Equality and Diversity Issues

9. The aim of the access way to the south of the hall will enable better access for emergency vehicles to aid evacuation of the building. The building has a number of changes in levels which would make evacuation in an emergency longer for those with limited mobility or those who use wheelchairs. This matter is discussed further in the report below.

The Proposal

10. The application is for the removal of part of the wall surrounding the north courtyard of Earlham Hall. This wall is on the west side of the courtyard facing the surrounding historic park of Earlham Park. The wall is around 1m in height along the section that is proposed to be removed. The total length to be removed is 5.8m in length.
11. The proposed access is for vehicles to travel on a reinforced track along the west elevation of Earlham Hall to the south entrance of the building. This is to enable emergency access and access for maintenance.
12. The new opening in the wall and the proposed track have been designed to enable a fire tender vehicle to access the south side of the building.
13. The opening in the wall will be restricted to general vehicles through a metal fencing and railings which are proposed to be installed. The proposal shows two pedestrian gates either side of central railings which would normally be left in place but could be removed to enable vehicular access. There would be timber bollards at intervals along the access track to guide any vehicles and to define the extent of the access track, to prevent vehicles travelling over the track and down the slope to the west of the site.

Representations Received

14. Advertised on site and in the press. Adjacent and neighbouring properties have been notified in writing. One letter of representation has been received citing the issue below.
- 15.

| Issues Raised | Response |
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| Could the gap in the wall not be placed symmetrically? | See paragraph 42 |

Consultation Responses

16. Norfolk Heritage Environment Services - No archaeological implications.
17. English Heritage – Object in principle.
18. Ancient Monuments Society - No response received
19. Council for British Archaeology - No response received
20. The Garden History Society - No response received
21. The Georgian Group - No response received
22. Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings - No response received
23. The Twentieth Century Society - No response received
24. The Victorian Society - No response received

ASSESSMENT OF PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Relevant Planning Policies

National Planning Policy Framework:

- Statement 11 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
- Statement 12 - Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

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

- ENV6 – The historic environment
- ENV7 – Quality in the built 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

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

- NE3 – Tree protection
- NE8 – Management of features of wildlife importance
- HBE8 – Development in conservation areas
- HBE9 – Listed buildings and development affecting them
- HBE12 – High quality of design

Supplementary Planning Documents and Guidance

- Trees and development SPD 2006

Principle of Development

Policy Considerations

25. The key considerations for assessing the impact on the Grade II* listed building, its setting and the wider conservation area are the loss of the wall and the visual impact of the track

matting on the ground along the west elevation. The impact on trees surrounding the site is also a consideration as these trees form the setting of the listed building and surrounding historic parkland.

Loss of existing wall

26. There would be a loss of part of the wall which creates the north courtyard, enclosing the hall from the surrounding park land. This has been noted by English Heritage as being a particularly important feature that creates a sense of enclosure in the north courtyard. Under applications 12/00712/F and 12/00713/L a new opening was proposed in the north east wall of this courtyard as well. English Heritage did not object to this proposal.

Impact on the setting of the listed building

27. English Heritage commented in their response to the application the wall in the north courtyard was added in 1906 creating a formal forecourt, which is likely to have characterised the immediate setting of the hall in the 16th and 17th centuries. The low-key sense of enclosure of the walls helps to focus attention on the main entrance to the building and create a hierarchy of space. The walls make a positive contribution to the significance of the listed building. English Heritage also considers that insufficient justification is provided to justify this loss.
28. Also it should be noted that the wall in the north courtyard is a later addition to the building, built around 1906. Previous to this there is photographic evidence in the Heritage Impact Assessment of the hall showing a metal fence around the north courtyard.

Provision of new access for maintenance and emergency service vehicles

29. The justification for the loss of the wall has been stated as emergency access to and maintenance of the south of the building. However, as maintenance has previously occurred without this new access way and could continue to occur without this new opening in the wall this reason is not considered, on its own, to be sufficient justification for the loss of the wall. The emergency access however for safe evacuation of the upper floors of the building from the south elevation of the building however is considered to be a matter that carries more weight.
30. Further information has been provided by the Fire Service identifying the new access way would enable better access to the building which would greatly enhance their ability to deal with fires, which could reduce the likelihood of the building being completely destroyed by fire should one occur. The new access way would therefore provide some benefits to fire safety of the building. The adverse impact on the historic character of the Hall must therefore be weighed against this benefit.

Improvements to pedestrian access and connectivity

31. Pedestrian access would also be enabled through the courtyard with these works. This links into the wider refurbishment plans of Earlham Hall that have recently been approved under listed building consent 12/00713/L. The north east wall of this courtyard has been granted consent to have part removed. This aims to improve pedestrian movement between the east courtyard of Earlham Hall and the north courtyard, with the overall aim of opening up the area surrounding the Hall to more people. The connectivity of these courtyards is important for pedestrians moving between routes into the Hall from University Drive to the park surrounding Earlham Hall. It would enable more people to be able to see the listed building in detail and access the proposed heritage interpretation material in the east courtyard before moving onto the wider park setting.
32. Whilst there is already a route around the wall this is informal, unmade ground which has

a more natural setting. The proposed access way would provide a legible route through for pedestrian to enable the listed building to be connected better to the surrounding historic parkland.

Revised design

33. The width of the opening has been reduced from 6.5m to 5.8m following discussions with the applicants. A metal gate and fence design has also alternatively been proposed as opposed to bollards to try and retain the sense of enclosure whilst still allowing public access from the park to the courtyard. The Heritage Impact Assessment with this application indicated that this metal fence previously enclosed the north courtyard before this wall was built in 1906. The pedestrian gates would remain mostly shut which would still retain the sense of enclosure. A condition is recommended to ensure the final materials and finish of the gates and fencing is of good design and to ensure the central fencing panel is only removed for emergency access or planned maintenance.
34. Bollards are proposed around the edge of the track matting within the parkland to define the edge to prevent any vehicles from travelling off this surface. Whilst the timber posts proposed are acceptable the precise siting, location and materials are recommended to be agreed through condition.

Alternative options

35. The alternatives to the proposed removal of part of the wall have been fully considered.
36. An existing external fire escape has previously provided fire escape means from the west of the building. Under the recent planning applications for the refurbishment of the hall this is proposed to be removed as it is considered to be an unsightly addition to the Grade II* listed building. This structure is considered to have more of an impact than the proposed new access way would on the appearance and setting of the listed building.
37. The hall is shortly to undergo a refurbishment programme which is scheduled to take 12 to 15 months according to the construction statement submitted with applications 12/00712/F and 12/00713/L. The works to bring the building back into use as the Law School for the University of East Anglia will take many months and require construction traffic to access the east, north and south of the hall. At present this access could be gained through a gate in the grounds of the hall in the park to the north west of the hall. This would require extensive temporary track matting to be used across the park to enable vehicles to access the site without damaging the unmade surface of the park. This would be more visually obtrusive than the proposed access way in the courtyard wall to the setting of the listed building and the historic parkland. The proposed access way through the north west wall in the north courtyard is therefore considered to be a less obtrusive and harmful option to enable the refurbishment of this Grade II* listed building.
38. Consideration has been given to the wall being temporarily removed and then rebuilt once refurbishment works of the hall are complete. It is unlikely that the rebuilt wall will fully resemble the original wall however due to change in colour of mortar and potential replacement bricks. It is likely that the replaced wall would appear different to the original wall for many years until brickwork and mortar weathered to a sufficient degree. It is therefore not considered to be a suitable alternative solution.

Conclusion on loss of wall

39. The issue raised by English Heritage of the wall creating a sense of enclosure has been considered and the plans revised by the applicants. The revised plans have removed the proposed bollards and instead installed metal fencing that forms two pedestrian gates either side of a lift-off panel of metal fencing that can all be removed to create the required

access route. The width of the opening has also been reduced from 6.5m to 5.85m to reduce the visual impact to the greatest degree possible whilst still allowing for access for fire tenders.

40. A condition is recommended for details of the railings and gate to be submitted so that the final design, materials and finish are of acceptable quality for the setting of the Grade II* listed building.
41. The impact on the character of the listed building and conservation area, and the loss of the sense of enclosure must therefore be weighed against the benefits to public access to the historic building and fire safety. The revised plans which incorporate gates and railings to retain the sense of enclosure have gone some way to address these concerns. The access way however would only be acceptable on the basis of infrequent vehicular use so that the metal railings could be predominantly retained in place to create the sense of enclosure. Use of this access way for any vehicle at any time would not be acceptable and is only considered to be acceptable on the basis of emergency access and planned refurbishment work of the building and grounds of Earlham Hall. A condition is therefore recommended as such to limit access to this basis only.

Archaeology

42. The impact on archaeology has been considered further but due to the relatively shallow earth works any existing artefacts are likely to have been disturbed by plant roots, earthworks or other turbidation of the ground. There are no archaeological implications to the proposed works.

Siting within existing wall

43. The siting also has been considered within the wall. The Norwich Society requested that the opening in the wall was more symmetrically placed. The issue with doing this would be the turning space for fire tenders. The land to the west side of the hall is not that wide before the land slopes away. Therefore the opening in the wall needs to be slightly wider and off-centre to allow vehicles to swing around in this tight space. Therefore the opening has been reduced as much as possible but cannot be more centrally placed than it is at present.

Installation of track matting

44. The proposed matting would cover a significant area around the west and south west of the Hall. The proposed material however has a light weight appearance that allows grass to grow over the material. This would reduce the visual impact of the matting when viewed from the wider area. A condition is recommended to ensure the final details are acceptable in terms of visual impact to the heritage assets.

Impact on trees

45. The trees surrounding Earlham Hall form an important setting to the Hall within the wider historic park. Therefore it is important in terms of the setting of the listed building to ensure there would be no adverse impacts on trees surrounding the site.
46. The proposed works would be adjacent to several trees and within the root protection zones of three trees (one beech tree to the north west of the Hall and two trees to the south west of the hall). Details have been submitted by the applicants to detail that any

excavations in this area would be hand dug and the foundations for any bollards would be compacted gravel to avoid using concrete, the leachate of which could damage tree roots. This is not sufficient information however to ensure there would be no damage to trees. Considering the works are relatively shallow and would not result in significant foundations or a larger building there is sufficient information to determine there could not be an adverse impact on the trees, provided further information is provided through a Tree Protection Plan and Arboricultural Method Statement.

Equality and Diversity Issues

68. The proposed access way would provide improved fire safety access to the rear of the hall. Whilst the safe evacuation of people from the hall can be achieved through current improved fire evacuation routes as approved under application 12/00713/L the new access way would only provide quicker evacuation opportunities if needed using a platform ladder on the south elevation.

Conclusions

47. The proposed access way would improve accessibility for fire services to the south elevation and improve pedestrian access around the hall and its setting. The sense of enclosure in the north courtyard would still be retained through the use of metal fencing and gates in a style similar to that previously used at the Hall, and provided works are carried out as specified in supporting information there would be no adverse impact on surrounding trees. As such the proposal accords with the criteria set out within policies NE3, NE8, HBE8, HBE9 and HBE12 of the City of Norwich Replacement Local Plan and policies 1 and 2 of the Joint Core Strategy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To approve application no 12/00471/F “Demolition of part of wall and formation of new vehicular link between the site entrance to the existing north car park, and the existing gravel area abutting the south elevation of the main building” and subject to the following conditions:

- 1) Standard time limit
- 2) In accordance with plans
- 3) Fencing panel to enable vehicle access only be removed for emergency access and planned refurbishment works of building and grounds (agreed in writing in advance with Council).
- 4) In accordance with AIA
- 5) Additional Tree Protection Plan and Arboricultural Method Statement
- 6) Details of:
 - a) Materials of metal railings and gate
 - b) Siting, location and materials of bollards around access way
 - c) Track matting specification

Reason for approval:

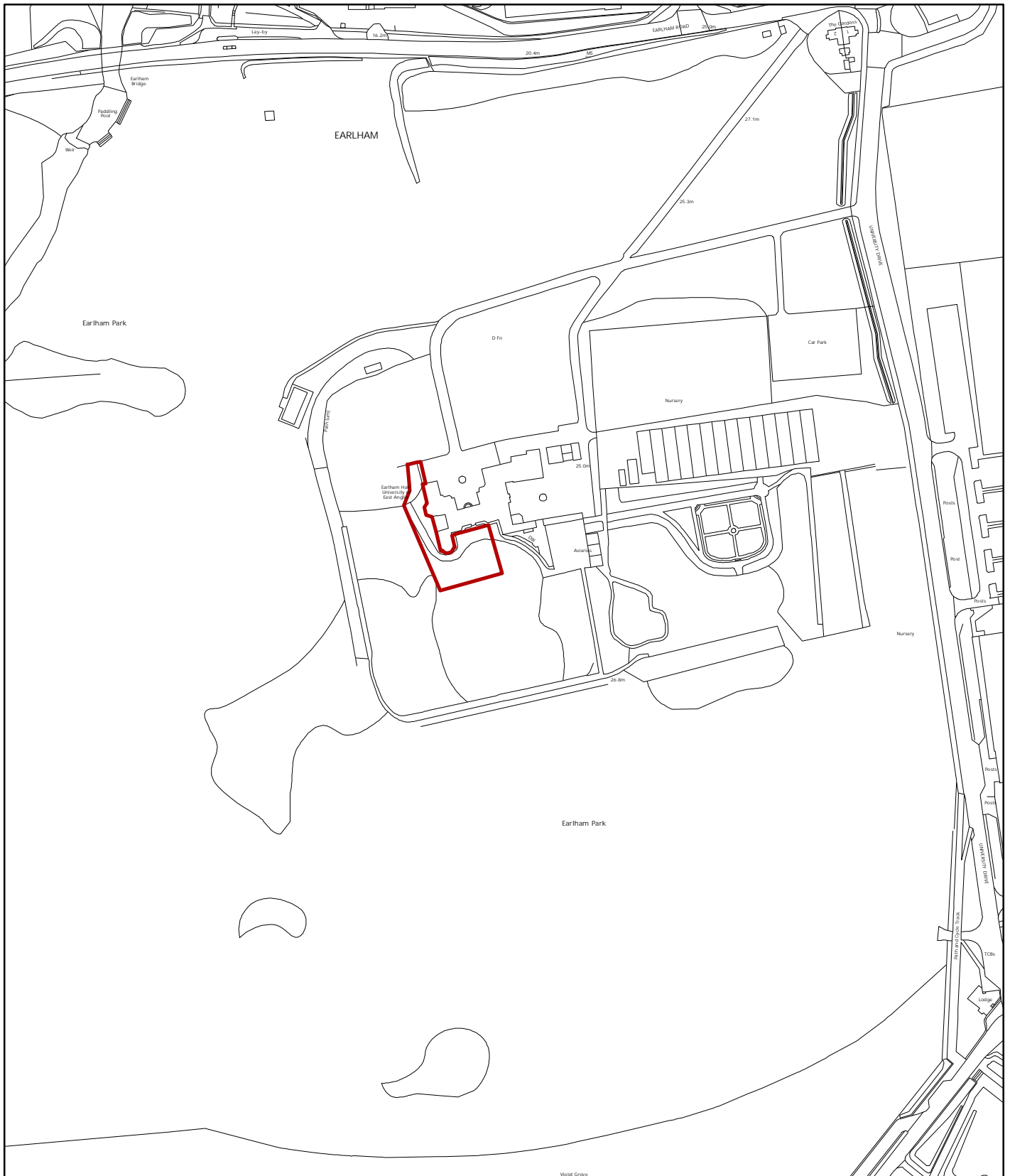
1) The decision is made with regard to policies NE3, NE8, HBE8 and HBE12 of the City of Norwich Replacement Local Plan, the adopted Joint Core Strategy March 2011 and all material considerations. The proposed access way would improve accessibility for fire services to the south elevation and improve pedestrian access around the hall and its setting. The sense of enclosure in the north courtyard would still be retained through the use of metal fencing and gates in a style similar to that previously used at the Hall.

To refer application no 12/00472/L "Demolition of part of wall and formation of new vehicular link between the site entrance to the existing north car park, and the existing gravel area abutting the south elevation of the main building" to the Secretary of State with a resolution to grant consent subject to the following conditions:

- 1) Standard time limit
- 2) In accordance with plans
- 3) Vehicle access gate to be kept shut and locked and access way to only be used for emergency access and planned refurbishment works of building and grounds (agreed in writing in advance with Council). Pedestrian gates to be unlocked at all times.
- 4) Details of:
 - a) Materials of metal railings and gate
 - b) Siting, location and materials of bollards around access way
 - c) Track matting specification

Reason for approval:

- 1) The decision is made with regard to policies NE3, NE8, HBE8 and HBE9 of the City of Norwich Replacement Local Plan, the adopted Joint Core Strategy March 2011 and all material considerations. The proposed access way would improve accessibility for fire services to the south elevation and improve pedestrian access around the hall and its setting. The sense of enclosure in the north courtyard would still be retained through the use of metal fencing and gates in a style similar to that previously used at the Hall.



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Planning Application No 12/00472/L

Site Address Earlam Hall Earlam Road

Scale 1:2,860



NORWICH
City Council

PLANNING SERVICES

