

Report for Resolution

Report to Planning Applications Committee
Date 18 March 2010
Report of Head of Planning Services
Subject 10/00133/F 6 Lansdowne Road Norwich NR6 6NF

Item
6(2)

SUMMARY

Description:	Change of use from warehousing (Class B8) to bus parking (sui generis) together with use of existing associated office for First Eastern Counties administration centre with staff car parking; new boundary fencing, additional lighting and CCTV on columns.
Reason for consideration at Committee:	Objection
Recommendation:	Approve subject to conditions
Ward:	Catton Grove
Contact Officer:	Mr Mark Brown Senior Planner 01603 212505
Valid date:	5th February 2010
Applicant:	First Eastern Counties
Agent:	JC Planning Consultants

INTRODUCTION

The Site

Location and Context

1. The site is located to the north of Lansdowne Road in Norwich and backs onto Fifers Lane. The site consists of an industrial unit located to the northeast corner of the site with adjoining 2-storey office accommodation in the southwest corner. The western most part of the site consists of an external yard accessed from Lansdowne Road to the south, this provides access to the industrial unit by an existing roller shutter door on the western elevation. Further access is provided to the building by two existing roller shutter doors on the southern elevation which open onto an external parking area for 20 cars.
2. To the south and east of the site are other industrial units and surface parking areas linked to those units. To the north is Fifers Lane which is separated from the site by a landscaped grass bank. The western boundary of the site is marked by landscaping and trees in the region of 3m in height beyond which is a private sports ground and residential properties located on Fifers Lane and Heath Crescent

Planning History

3. There is no relevant recent planning history on the site. In 1987 permission was granted for a change of use to warehousing at the site (87/1319/U). It is understood that the most recent use of the site was for B8 storage and distribution use, the site therefore benefits from either storage and distribution or B1 business or light industrial use via permitted development rights.

The Proposal

4. The proposal is for the change of use of the site from storage and distribution (B8) to bus parking for 60 buses (sui generis). It is proposed to park 54 buses within the building and 6 buses within the yard to the west of the site. A one way system is proposed where buses access the site via the external yard to the west, gaining access to the west elevation of the building and exiting the building via the roller shutter doors to the south of the building. It is also proposed to utilise the associated two storey offices as an administrative centre for First Eastern Counties.
5. Car parking is provided for bus drivers and staff of the offices in the parking area to the south of the building, in the external yard and within the building when the first phases of buses have left in the morning.
6. Two new CCTV columns and four lighting columns are proposed within the yard to the west of the site as well as a cycle shelter close to the access to the offices.

Background

7. The proposals are intended as an alternative to the site currently being used for bus parking on Vulcan Road North. Planning permission was granted on the Vulcan Road North site in November 2009 following consideration by the planning committee in September 2009. The consent for Vulcan Road North was granted subject to a number of conditions restricting (amongst others) the hours of use of the site, requiring extensive landscaping, an acoustic fence and requiring reverse beepers to be switched off during certain periods. These conditions were imposed due to the sites location immediately adjacent to a number of residential properties, with limited existing landscaped screening.
8. The applicant has advised that the site the subject of the application has recently become available, and due to the operational limitations of the Vulcan Road North site (as a result of the restrictive conditions) the applicant feels that this site would provide an effective alternative which the applicant feels is not likely to raise the same environmental and amenity concerns to Vulcan Road North.

Representations Received

9. Advertised on site and in the press. Adjacent and neighbouring properties have been notified in writing. Two letters of representation have been received citing the issues as summarised in the table below.

Issues Raised	Response
Concern over the proximity to residential dwellings.	See paragraphs 16-24
Concern over increased noise levels.	See paragraphs 16-22
Pollution from engine fumes.	See paragraph 23

One letter queries the stated area of the external yard in the planning statement detailed as 3,413sqm.	This was as a result of a typing error in the planning statement the area of the yard is 1,481sqm.
The noise assessment is predictive and is concerned over the method of assessment giving an average noise level over a given period of time.	See paragraphs 16-22
Movements from the site between 7am and 8am will conflict with peak hour traffic movements.	See paragraphs 26-28
The noise mitigation barrier does not extend far enough south.	See paragraphs 23

Consultation Responses

10. Broadland District Council Environmental Health - I have no objections to the above application, subject to the erection of the 2.4m acoustic fence.
11. Broadland District Council Planning – No comments
12. Norwich City Council Environmental Health – I have considered the noise reports and feel that resulting LAeq levels, on which the basis for potential noise nuisance has principally been based, are acceptable both weekday and weekend assuming the 2.4m acoustic fence is installed. I do however feel that the potentially loud, albeit short, bursts of noise associated with car door slamming, engine revving etc is not so well addressed, ie as expressed in the LAmax & inversely related to the LA90. This would also include reverse alarms which do not appear to have been considered at all. Therefore I would request that the use of reversing alarms be restricted by condition. First Bus appear to claim that there will be little to no requirement for reversing given the system of bus flow through the site, but this may not be so systematic on a Sunday when maintenance/washing etc would be carried out.
13. Transport – Although this could not be required, the applicant should be encouraged to implement a travel plan for the administrative offices which would also help to establish an appropriate level of cycle parking for the site.

ASSESSMENT OF PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Relevant Planning Policies

Relevant National Planning Policies

PPS1 – Delivering Sustainable Development
PPS4 – Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth
PPG13 – Transport
PPG24 – Planning and Noise

Relevant Strategic Regional Planning Policies

East of England Plan 2008

E2 – Provision of land/premises for employment;
E3 – Identification of strategic employment sites to support regeneration;
T13 – Public Transport Accessibility
NR1 – Norwich Key Centre for development and change:

Relevant Local Plan Policies

City of Norwich Replacement Local Plan 2004

EMP2 – Expansion of existing businesses

EMP5 – General Mixed Use Employment Areas

EP5 – Air pollution emissions and sensitive uses

EP22 – Residential Amenity

TRA16 – Public Transport Measures to increase efficiency and Attractiveness

Principle of Development

Policy Considerations

14. The site lies within the Vulcan Road/Fifers Lane Industrial Estate which is a General Mixed Use Employment Area allocated under the City of Norwich Replacement Local Plan Policy EMP5 and is intended for development principally for B1, B2 and B8 uses albeit with more flexibility for other uses than applies in Prime Employment Areas.
15. The proposals would fall under the definition of economic development given within PPS4. PPS4 focuses on 'economic development' as opposed to 'employment uses' creating a shift in national policy emphasis from protecting employment areas for narrow categories of employment use (such as light industry and warehousing) to a more proactive and flexible approach promoting job-creating and economic output.
16. The proposals include the use of the offices for administrative staff which is a B1 use linked to the operation of the site and is an employment use. The proposals are therefore considered to be consistent with the objectives of saved policy EMP5 and PPS4.

Impact on Living Conditions

Noise and Disturbance

17. The boundary of the nearest residential property on Fifers Lane is located approximately 23m beyond the western boundary of the site in question, separated by a strip of land linked to the adjacent sports ground. The western boundary of the site is marked by a dense evergreen hedge, behind which is further deciduous planting. The strip of land between the nearest properties on Fifers Lane is laid to lawn with the boundary of the nearest property on Fifers Lane marked by a 2m high fence. Further south within the sports ground are tennis courts and a bowling green bounded by landscaping which separate the site from properties on Heath Crescent.
18. The submitted planning statement indicates that bus movements would primarily take place between 06:00 and 08:00 and 18:00 to 21:00 Monday to Saturday. The site has been designed to incorporate a one-way system which should minimise the need for reversing and movements on site, it is considered that this would work well subject to appropriate management. Buses will not operate from the site on Sundays, however there would be some movements to take buses to the Vulcan Road South depot where buses are cleaned, serviced and refuelled. The normal operating hours on Sunday are suggested as 09:00 to 17:00. However, the applicant is seeking an unrestricted consent in terms of operating hours.
19. The one way system also means that buses parked in the 6 spaces in the yard would be the latest to leave the depot and the first spaces to be filled, therefore limiting the impact of manoeuvring and reversing in the yard early in the morning or late at night.

20. A noise assessment has been submitted with the application which suggests that the site could be operated without causing excessive noise to nearby houses and without the need for noise mitigation. Nevertheless, it is suggested that an acoustic fence could be erected on the western boundary of the site to provide further noise mitigation.
21. Broadland District Council and Norwich City Council Environmental Health departments have both advised that they are satisfied that subject to the erection of the acoustic fence that the proposals would not result in an unacceptable level of ambient noise.
22. The large majority of the site is enclosed within the existing building, it is considered that the main consideration is parking in the external yard. Norwich City Council Environmental Health have advised that ambient noise would not be unacceptable given existing background noise levels and have suggested that the main issue to be considered is individual peaks in noise which are the result of slamming doors and reversing alarms etc. The noise mitigation report details that the acoustic fence would result in a considerable reduction in these peaks to the nearest property on Fifers Lane. The provision of the acoustic fence prior to the first use of the site should therefore form a condition of any consent.
23. One resident has suggested that the acoustic fence should extend further south outside of the application boundary. Whilst this would result in some further screening of noise from the road, this is not considered necessary in this case. The main peaks in sound from manoeuvring, reversing and slamming of doors would occur within the yard which is well surrounded by the acoustic fence and existing landscaping.
24. Norwich City Council Environmental Health have suggested the restriction of reversing alarms by condition. It is understood that this gives rise to a number of operational and health and safety difficulties in the operation of buses from the site. PPG24 advises local authorities to give careful consideration to the imposition of conditions particularly where an existing development enjoys planning permission. It is relevant to consider that the existing use of the site is a storage and distribution warehouse which is unrestricted in its potential operation and has no restrictions on reversing alarms. The proposals for the management of the site will result in limited need for reversing in the yard, there should be no more than four reversing movements in the yard per day. Given the operational difficulties, the existing use of the site and the proposed management of the site it is not considered necessary or reasonable to impose a condition restricting reversing alarms.
25. Further information has also been received concerning reversing alarms since the receipt of Environmental Health's comments detailing that sound from reversing beepers would be just below engine noise, although acknowledging that due to their tonal character the alarms draw more attention. This also details that reversing movements would be limited to four movements during weekdays and that whilst there may be some further reversing movements in the yard on a Sunday this would be limited to a few buses reversing out to the yard to allow for some movements within the building. On a Sunday the applicant proposes to restrict working hours to 9:00 to 17:00 to ensure that reversing movements do not take place during unsociable hours.
26. The details discussed above relating to site management, the one way system and the phasing of bus movements at the site have been detailed within the submitted parking strategy plan, noise assessment and planning statement. This method of management has been used to justify the recommendation. It is considered appropriate to condition compliance with a management plan providing this information in a single document which also provides further information on how bus movements and the one way system would

be managed on a daily basis and relayed to bus drivers.

Air Quality

27. As the area is not in an Air Quality Management Area an Air Quality Assessment has not been required and it is not considered that that air quality will be unduly affected by the bus operation. No ventilation or extraction is proposed to the building under this application, it is considered appropriate to place a condition on any consent requiring details of any such equipment prior to its installation should it be required.

Lighting

28. Four lighting columns are proposed on the site, three are located on the western boundary facing east away from the residential properties and one located on the northern boundary of the site facing south. Given the levels of landscaping along the western boundary it is not considered that there would be a significant detrimental impact to neighbour amenities from light pollution.

Design

29. External alterations to the site are limited and consist of the lighting and CCTV columns, cycle parking and the erection of a palisade and acoustic fence around the external yard. Further details of the appearance of the columns and cycle parking should be provided via condition.

Transport and Access

30. An efficient public transport system is critical to the operation of the City, and it is imperative, therefore that appropriate depot facilities are available to enable these services to operate. Therefore, in principle the proposals are welcomed from a transportation perspective.
31. The level of traffic movement associated with the facility is not particularly high, and the vast majority of it is outside peak times. It is unlikely that the operation of this facility will have any detrimental effect locally in highway terms given the likely timing of movements to and from the site, and it is necessary that these services are available to the wider travelling public during peak times, to help to maximise the use of sustainable transport, and achieve modal shift away from the car. The level of car parking required for this operation is high although alternatives to car travel are limited or unattractive in the early hours of the morning.
32. The administrative offices are different to the predominant use of the site as staff are more likely to travel during peak times. The offices are however already an established use. Whilst a travel plan would not be required as the offices are existing and do not meet the threshold of 500sqm set under saved policy TRA12, the applicant has been encouraged to implement one.
33. A small cycle shelter is shown on the plans, however further details of this and the exact number of cycle parking spaces to be provided should be required via condition.

Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy

34. The proposals primarily involve a change of use to an existing building. The wider benefit of this type of use is that it enables the provision of a suitable more sustainable alternative

mode of transport to the motor vehicle.

Trees and Landscaping

35. The landscaped strip between the site and Fifers Lane is occupied by a number of mature trees, some of which are subject to a TPO. Given that there are no significant physical alterations or ground works it is not considered that the proposals would have any significant detrimental impact on these trees.

Conclusions

36. The proposals provide for essential depot facilities which are critical to the efficient operation of the City's public transport system. The site is allocated general employment land and it is considered that the proposed use of the site is consistent with the objectives of economic and employment policy. Following consultation with Broadland District Council and Norwich City Council Environmental Health Services it is considered that subject to appropriate conditions the proposals would not have a significant detrimental impact on the amenities of nearby residents. On this basis the scheme is recommended for approval.

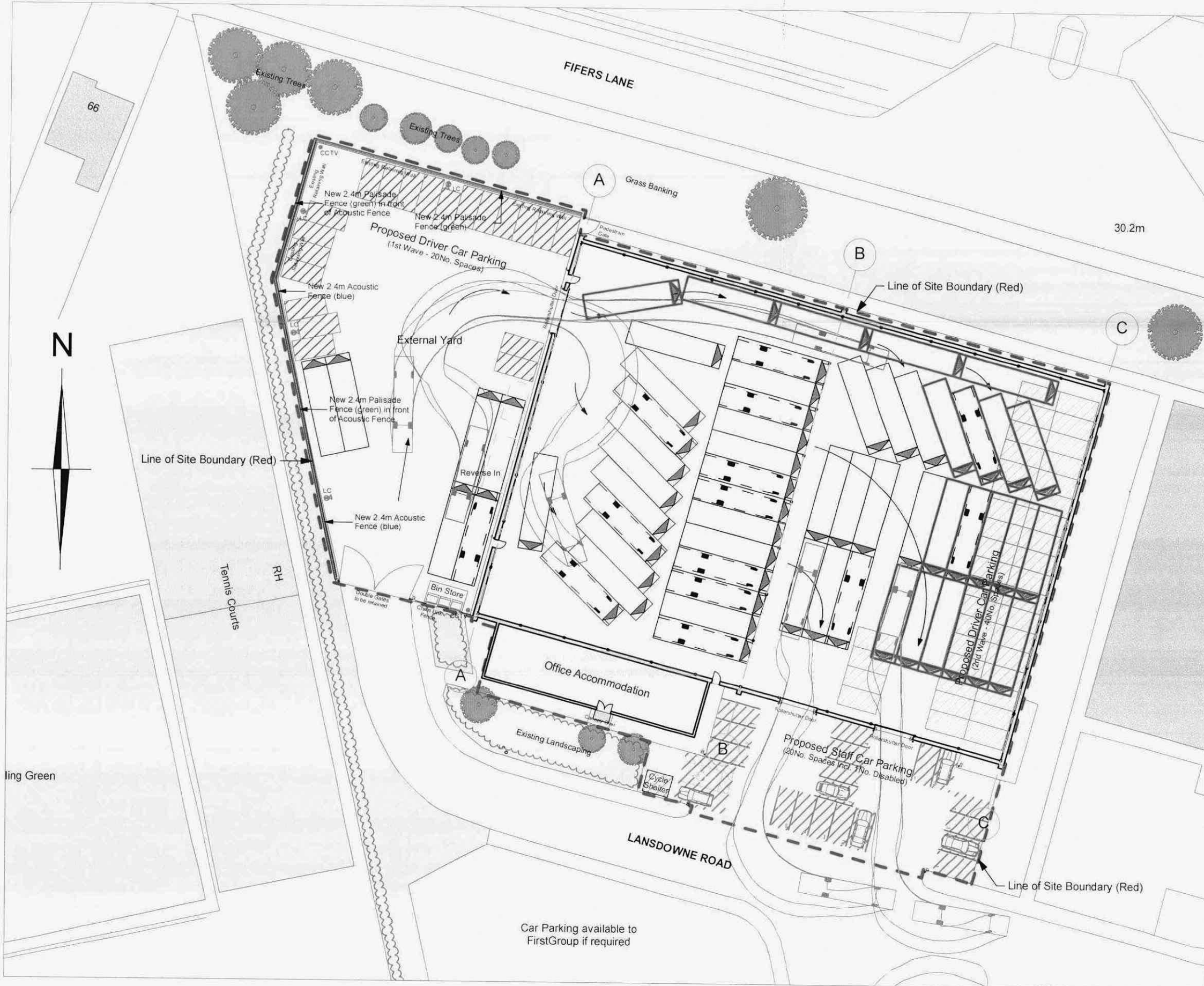
RECOMMENDATIONS

To approve Application No (10/00133/F 6 Lansdowne Road Norwich NR6 6NF) and grant planning permission, subject to the following conditions:-

1. Time limit;
2. Development in accordance with plans;
3. Erection of acoustic fence prior to first use of the site;
4. Compliance with a management plan to be submitted detailing the phasing of buses, the one way system and the management of this system;
5. Details of any ventilation and/or extraction equipment;
6. Details, including plans indicating the height and design of the lighting and cctv columns;
7. Details, number and appearance of the cycle parking;






(Reasons for approval: The decision has been made with particular regard to policies E2, E3, T13 and NR1 of the adopted East of England Plan, saved policies EMP2, EMP5, EP5, EP22 and TRA16 of the adopted City of Norwich Replacement Local Plan, PPS1, PPS4, PPG13, PPG24 and other material planning considerations.

The proposals provide for essential depot facilities which are critical to the efficient operation of the City's public transport system. The site is allocated general employment land and it is considered that the proposed use of the site is consistent with the objectives of economic and employment policy. Following consultation with Broadland District Council and Norwich City Council Environmental Health Services it is considered that subject to appropriate conditions the proposals would not have a significant detrimental impact on the amenities of nearby residents.)



Note:
All site dimensional data derived from Ordnance Survey mapping information.
Site boundary indicated from information by client.

Parking Strategy Legend

-  Indicates 20No. External Car Parking for Drivers (1st Wave)
-  Indicates 40No. Internal Car Parking for Drivers (2nd Wave)
-  Indicates 20No. External Car Parking for Office Staff
-  Indicates Buses removed during 1st Wave Driver period
-  Indicates 12 x 3m Bus Parking Bay

Rev. C	Western Boundary amended to show Palisade in front of Acoustic Fence - Issued to Planning for Submission.	21.01.10
Rev. B	AutoTracking amended, Cycle Shelter & Bin Store added - Issued to Planning.	17.12.09
Rev. A	AutoTracking shown - Issued To Planning.	19.11.09

Revision	Description	Date
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Client

First  FirstGroup Property
transforming travel

Project

Proposed Bus Depot
Lansdowne Road, Norwich

Drawing Title

Parking Strategy Plan



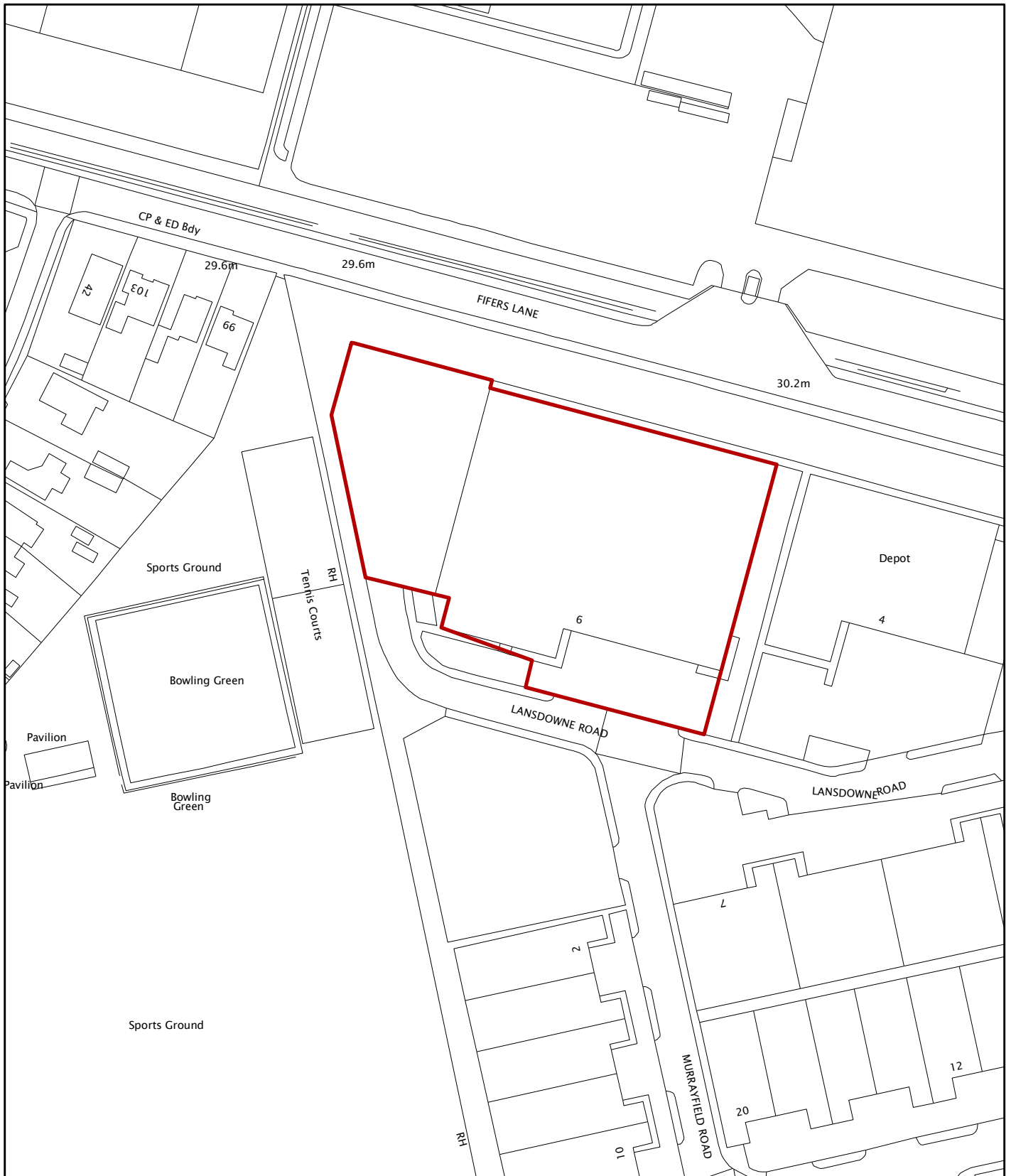
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ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN PROJECT MANAGEMENT
PLANNING SUPERVISION 3D ARCHITECTURAL CAD

Drawing Status	Planning	
Scales	1:500 at A3	Date Nov '09
Drawing Number	513-002	Revision C

Parking Strategy Plan

Scale 1:500



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Planning Application No - 10/00133/F
 Site Address - 6 Lansdowne Road, Norwich
 Scale - 1:1,250



NORWICH
City Council

PLANNING SERVICES

