



**Preliminary response by Norwich Society to Planning Application:**

**07/01349/F Anglia Square Including Land And Buildings to the North and West, Anglia Square, Norwich**

The Anglia Square Partnership propose to redevelop the site in two phases, of which this is the first. The plan involves demolishing the office blocks, notably Sovereign House of 1966-68, and replacing them with new residential blocks and a supermarket, moving Anglia Square further to the west, away from Magdalen Street.

Any plan to transfigure the biggest blot on Norwich's landscape should avoid repeating the mistakes made in the Sixties and Seventies. The buildings in the Anglia Square complex and the economic generators housed in them were too *big*. The scheme was an attempt to superimpose a monumental high-rise development on a complex, organically-grown low-rise district. In the words of the developers in their Design Statement:

'This typical 70's development has severed some of the ancient routes such as the link between St Augustine's and Magdalen Streets. It has been extremely successful in blocking the views of the City Landmarks for example, visual contact with the Castle, St Augustine's Church, Roman Catholic Cathedral'.

However, the developers then fail to refer to the impact of the proposed 19-storey Tower Block A on the views of the City landmarks, including the two Cathedrals, the Castle, St Giles Church and the skyline generally, which will be at least as disastrous - if not more so given the additional height - as that of the '70s development which they rightly deplore. This is made worse by the poor design, a throw back not to the '70s but the '60s. Its built form is also argued as "a new landmark building for the regeneration proposals", a vanity statement which should not be allowed to crudely overpower our unique Cityscape.

The high-rise tower is also justified for the provision of residential accommodation, but this could, and should, be spread round the rest of the development where it would not have the same disastrous impact on significant views. The developers deplore the impact of the '70s development on access to Anglia Square, but their solution, a pedestrian approach from Calvert Street, with a pedestrian crossing of the dual carriageway St Crispin's Road, would cause congestion on the St Crispin's/Pitt Streets roundabout, and still leave pedestrians having to walk up a level to the supermarket. The natural pedestrian and cycle route into Anglia Square is from Magdalen Street, but this is, unfortunately, left to the next stage, with no masterplan offered and the area likely to suffer blight as building proceeds. The end product will leave Anglia Square featureless, devoid of vision and purpose, the space shoppers pass through on their way to the



supermarket volume at first floor level, with a poor and unresolved architectural elevation to the whole of that side of the new space.

The failure to recognise the importance of the Magdalen Street access, and enhance its existing shopping role as an obvious link to the City centre, is one indicator of the application's failure to consider pedestrian routes and movement across the whole site. What for instance is the proposed connectivity to the development suggested for the St Mary's Works site? And also related to pedestrian and public use is the general lack of green space at ground level. This all indicates how essential it is to prepare a masterplan for the *whole* site, now, before any further decisions are made.

*Norwich Society 15.2.2008*

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