



Plans Inspected

09/01297/U – Norwich Caravans, Bishop Bridge Road

Retrospective application for change of use from sale and display of caravans (Sui Generis) to sale, display, repair and storage of cars (Sui Generis).

Although this has been approved, we would like to emphasise that this is not a suitable permanent use of this prominent, historic site.

09/01368/L – YMCA, 46 – 48 St Giles Street

Erection of 40 bedsit flats with associated training rooms, office, interview rooms and communal lounge; the demolition of existing gymnasium and 4 storey accommodation block; alterations to existing building including blocking up openings and forming new window openings; associated external works.

No improvement to original application which was seen by the Quality Panel. The footprint is being rigidly retained for the block, over-powering St Giles' Terrace. The high new block fronting Bethel Street is not in keeping with the street-scale or the design of Georgian and older, lower buildings (see 56 Bethel Street, below – practically next door).

HBE9

- (iv) Any new development near to such buildings should respect their setting, style, character and materials; where the development would have a visual impact on the listed building.

09/01404/L – The Cathedral Church of St John the Baptist

Display of 1) 2 No non illuminated totem signs; 2) 9 no non illuminated wall mounted signs; 3) 2 No post mounted non illuminated signs.

A plethora of signage, albeit tasteful, but are they all necessary?

09/01321/F – 10 & 11 Parsonage Square

Conversion of 10 and 11 Parsonage Square from non-residential institution (Class D1) to two dwellings (Class C3)

A very nice scheme and excellent to refurbish these properties. However the bamboo (unless a woven screen) seems totally inappropriate and native plants would be a better option.

09/01090/NF3, 09/01502/NF3, 09/01503/NF3, 09/01504/NF3, 09/01510/NF3 – Palmer Road

Window replacement works

Our comments apply as for all previous City Council applications for replacement windows and doors. These applications are a disgrace; the same lame and incorrect Design and Access Statement is always used, safe in the knowledge that nobody will even look at it. These five applications all contain photographs of the same two houses, and do not relate to the applications which accompany them. Do these well-built buildings merit so little care or protection?

If the City Council cannot afford to maintain old timber windows and wishes to improve thermal insulation and the eco-credentials of its properties, it would do well to read the published research on replacement windows. This



shows that uPVC frames are made by an energy-intensive process producing many poisonous pollutants such as hydrocarbons, dioxins and heavy metals. Their life-span is relatively short before they fail, and they are very difficult to repair; they are very sensitive towards high temperature and ultra-violet radiation, resulting in embrittlement and discoloration. PVC when discarded decomposes very slowly and contains environmentally dangerous substances which can seep out into soil and ground water. The estimated service life is 24.1 years.

Compare this with aluminium-clad timber windows, low maintenance and easy to repair. Their estimated service life is 46.7 years, nearly twice as long as uPVC. They may be more expensive initially, but the much improved 'prognosis' makes them a far more economical and eco-friendly choice in the long term.

[information and figures taken from **Life Cycle of Window Materials – a Comparative Assessment** by M. Asif, A. Davidson & T. Muneer, School of Engineering, Napier University, Edinburgh]

The City Council are not protecting Norwich's renowned heritage of council properties which is systematically being diminished by the use of cheap, badly-designed, stop-gap inappropriate uPVC windows and doors. Other housing on the Mile Cross estate has been protected by listing; there seems no reason why these houses should not receive the same care. These excellent examples of local government housing laid out in 'Garden City' style are being vandalised while we watch.

09/01285/F – 56 Bethel Street

Installation of new shopfront, replacement of first and second floor front windows and new second floor rear extension to create enlarged flat.

Is this building listed? Perhaps it should be. The plan form with a recessed entry should be retained for streetscape enhancement. This is a Georgianised jettied 16-17C building and needs protection. Why replace Georgian window with Victorian? The rear gable looks to be in original condition. It is good to bring such housing back into residential use, but the conservation officer should ensure that the historic interior and structure is not entirely lost.

09/01430/F – St Stephen's Church, Rampant Horse Street

Demolition of 13m stretch of unsafe retaining wall and erection of new retaining wall using reclaimed materials.

Rendering is more flexible if lime mortar is used. This is far better suited to flint work than the cement rendering suggested.

09/01451/F – 6 Ash Grove

Erection of two storey extension to side of dwelling

Bringing forward this extension will upset the balance of this delightful pair of cottages. Ash Grove has lost its conservation status because of similar such alterations.

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