

Anglia Square, Norwich

Commercial Strategy and Main Town Centre Uses Report

Dated March 2022

**Weston
Homes**



c p w planning

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prepared for and on behalf of

Weston Homes Plc

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1. Introduction

Background

- 1.1 This Commercial Strategy & Main Town Centre Uses Report has been prepared by CPW Planning on behalf of Weston Homes Plc (the Applicant) in support of a hybrid (part full/part outline) planning application, (the Application), submitted to Norwich City Council (NCC) for the comprehensive redevelopment of Anglia Square and various parcels of mostly open surrounding land, (the Site), as shown within a red line on drawing ‘ZZ-00-DR-A-01-0200’.
- 1.2 The Site is located in a highly accessible position within the northern part of Norwich City Centre and comprises a significant element of the Anglia Square/Magdalen Street/St Augustines Large District Centre, (the LDC). It is thus of strategic importance to the City, and accordingly has been identified for redevelopment for many years within various local planning policy documents, including the Northern City Centre Area Action Plan 2010, (NCCAAP), (now expired), the Joint Core Strategy for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk 2014, (JCS), and NCC’s Anglia Square and Surrounding Area Policy Guidance Note 2017, (PGN). The Site forms the principal part of an allocation (GNLP 0506) in the emerging Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP).
- 1.3 This application follows a previous application on a somewhat smaller development parcel, (NCC Ref. 18/00330/F) made jointly by Weston Homes Plc as development partner and Columbia Threadneedle Investments, (CTI), the Site’s owner, for a residential-led mixed use scheme consisting of up to 1250 dwellings with decked parking, and 11,000 sqm GEA flexible ground floor retail/commercial/non-residential institution floorspace, hotel, cinema, multi-storey public car park, place of worship, and associated public realm and highway works. This was subject to a Call-in by the Secretary of State (PINS Ref. APP/G2625/V/19/3225505) who refused planning permission on 12th November 2020, (the ‘Call in Scheme’).
- 1.4 In April 2021, following new negotiations with Site owner CTI, Weston Homes decided to explore the potential for securing planning permission for an alternative scheme via an extensive programme of public and stakeholder engagement, from the earliest concepts to a fully worked up application. The negotiations with CTI have secured a “Subject to Planning” contract to purchase the Site, (enlarged to include the southeastern part of Anglia Square fronting Magdalen Street and St Crispins Road), which has enabled a completely fresh approach to establishing a redevelopment scheme for Anglia Square. This has resulted in a different development brief for the scheme, being to create a replacement part of the larger LDC suited to the flexible needs of a wide range of retail, service, business and community uses, reflective of trends in town centre character, integrated with the introduction of homes across the Site, within a highly permeable layout, well connected to its surroundings.
- 1.5 The new development proposal seeks to comprehensively redevelop the Site to provide up to 1,100 new residential dwellings and up to 8,000 sqm Net Internal Area (NIA) flexible retail, commercial and other non-residential floorspace including Community Hub, up to 450 car parking spaces (at least 95% spaces for class C3 use, and up to 5% for class E/F1/F2/Sui Generis uses), car club spaces and associated works to the highway and public realm areas (the Proposed Development). These figures are maxima in view of the hybrid nature of the application. This proposes part of the scheme designed in full, to accommodate 367 dwellings, 5,808 sqm non-residential floorspace, and 146 car parking spaces (at least 95% spaces for residential use, and up to 5% for non-residential use), with the remaining large part of the Site for later detailed design as a “Reserved Matters” application, up to those maxima figures.

Purpose of report

- 1.6 This report sets out the commercial strategy for the non-residential uses proposed as part of the Anglia Square redevelopment.
- 1.7 As part of the redevelopment proposals, all existing retail accommodation will be demolished and replaced with new, flexible accommodation at ground floor level and, to a lesser extent, upper floor levels (see masterplan drawings 'ZZ-00-DR-A-01-0100 to ZZ-00-DR-A-01-0103' shown in Appendix A). This will be suitable for a range of main town centre and other related uses.
- 1.8 The commercial strategy reflects the role of Anglia Square as the principal element of the northern Large District Centre and linked to this, the aspiration to create a sustainable mixed-use development serving the needs of the local community and new on-site residents.
- 1.9 It should be read with an understanding that, while Anglia Square continues to perform an important function for the local community, particularly for discount or value-led shopping, the high occupancy of existing retail accommodation is not sustainable due to escalating maintenance costs and 'sub market' rental levels in particular.
- 1.10 It should also be highlighted that the retail and leisure market has changed significantly since the submission of the Call in Scheme in 2018, due not least to the Covid-19 pandemic, as recognised within the Greater Norwich town centres and retail study update (December 2020). The changes continue to have deep and long-lasting implications for town centres, including the Large District Centre, and have influenced the scale and mix of non-residential uses proposed.
- 1.11 It has therefore been necessary to re-set the commercial strategy and to that end, the Weston Homes redevelopment proposals respond to some critical 'demand driver' changes to the Call in Scheme, notably the exclusion of the cinema, hotel and public multi-storey car park.
- 1.12 Like the Call in Scheme, however, flexibility is sought for a range of main town centre and other related uses to enable the scheme to respond to market demands and the changing needs of town centre users, thus ensuring a successful level of occupancy and the future vitality of the Large District Centre as a whole.

Structure of report

- 1.13 The remainder of this report is structured as follows:
 - Section 2 sets out the changes in the retail market since the Call in Scheme;
 - Section 3 assesses the current role and function of Anglia Square as part of the Large District Centre;
 - Section 4 discusses the planning policy considerations relevant to this report;
 - Section 5 describes the proposed vision for Anglia Square and how this will support the function of the wider Large District Centre;
 - Section 6 considers phasing and the management of construction-related impacts on the Large District Centre; and
 - Section 7 provides a summary and conclusions.

2. The retail market context

- 2.1 The structural changes in the retail market and their impact on town centres have been prevalent over the last decade. However, the pace of change since the 2018 submission of the Call in Scheme is significant and should not be under-estimated, with the pandemic having long-lasting and potentially permanent impacts on the retail, leisure and hospitality sectors.
- 2.2 The most recent Greater Norwich town centres and retail study update (December 2020) describes that the *economic downturn, the growth in internet shopping and the continued demand for out-of-centre shopping has resulted in national retailers reviewing and rapidly adapting their business strategies over the past several years*¹. These challenges, which have been exacerbated by the pandemic, will continue to have significant implications for market demand and Norwich's centres.
- 2.3 The study observes that *a number of key retailers have either disappeared from our high streets altogether, or have significantly reduced their store portfolios in centres across the UK*². It adds:
- ...there is an increasing polarisation and concentration of retailer demand and investment interest in the larger regional and sub-regional centres [with] large and established catchment areas;*
- ...retailer and investment demand is also mainly focused on the prime retail pitches, with the secondary and tertiary pitches contracting and deteriorating in some cases due to limited demand;*
- The continuation of these trends will impact on future operator requirements, with retailers looking to satisfy their demand for larger modern premises in prime shopping locations*³. (emphasised)
- 2.4 Anglia Square falls within the category of a secondary retail area, serving a relatively localised catchment commensurate with its 'second tier' status in the hierarchy of centres. National retailer demand is increasingly limited in such locations. Even the City Centre's prime retail pitches are being affected by changing retailer requirements, with notable voids including the former BHS and Debenhams department stores, while the former Topshop store has been acquired for mixed-use redevelopment. Despite these key store closures, the City Centre remains a strong and attractive regional shopping destination and includes a wide range of major retailers and commercial leisure operators.
- 2.5 The food and beverage sector has been significantly challenged with several operators in financial distress and announcing widespread closures (including but not limited to Chiquito, Pizza Express and Prezzo). Cinemas have also been particularly affected by the pandemic-induced closure of indoor venues and social-distancing measures.
- 2.6 The Local Data Company⁴ reports that both retail and leisure UK average vacancy rates increased to record highs of 15.8% and 11.3% respectively in 2021, compared with 12.3% and 8.1% in 2018. Although these vacancy rates are not seen at Anglia Square, partly due to the 'sub market' rental levels, they serve to illustrate the scale of closures as activity from company voluntary arrangements (CVAs), administrations and store rationalisation programmes has filtered through. It also finds that independents continue to be more

¹ Paragraph 3.48.

² Paragraph 3.51.

³ Paragraph 3.52.

⁴ GB Retail and Leisure Market Analysis H1 2021: Looking Beyond Lockdown, Local Data Company (September 2021).

resilient than multiples; driven by the convenience (grocers, butchers, bakers) and leisure (cafes, fast food) sectors.

- 2.7 According to the Local Data Company's market analysis, the fastest growing retail and leisure categories include grocers and convenience stores (with a net gain of 540 units i.e. +540), fast food takeaways (+333), barbers (+318) and beauty salons and nail bars (+167). Meanwhile, the fastest declining categories are fashion-orientated shops (-1,031), charity shops (-466), bookmakers (-342) and banks and other financial institutions (-188).
- 2.8 Prevailing market conditions are much tougher now than in 2018 and this has consequences for the scale and mix of retail and leisure floorspace that can be supported as part of the Anglia Square redevelopment. There is a greater need for a flexible approach to ensuring the vitality of town centres and the introduction of Class E within the Use Classes Order, in September 2020, responded to this.
- 2.9 Section 5 of this report includes the vision for the non-residential uses proposed and how this will support the function of the Large District Centre.

3. The current role and function of Anglia Square

- 3.1 Anglia Square shopping centre is the principal element of the northern Large District Centre, approximately one mile north of the central area of Norwich City Centre and secondary in both appearance and its retail offer.
- 3.2 Table 1 below provides an overview of the scale and mix of uses within the application site (excluding Sovereign House and Gildengate House). A unit-by-unit tenancy and floorspace schedule is included at Appendix B.

Table 1 – Existing floorspace within the application site

Use Class Category	Existing floorspace (sqm GIA)
Class E - Convenience Retail	1,568
Class E - Comparison Retail	7,334
Class E - Retail Service	219
Class E - Leisure Service	338
Sui Generis	4,196
Vacant	3,762
TOTAL	17,415

Source: Appendix B.

- 3.3 It should be noted that a large proportion of the Sui Generis floorspace indicated in Table 1 is not atypical of the type of uses which support or complement the function of a Large District Centre. This includes Anglia Square Cars and the Pitt Street properties including the car wash. Meanwhile, most of the existing vacant floorspace comprises the former cinema (2,577 sqm GIA), the former nightclub (958 sqm GIA) and the former shopping centre management office (141 sqm GIA). Such floorspace is redundant and no longer fit-for-purpose.
- 3.4 Excluding this Sui Generis and vacant floorspace from the above analysis results in a total existing floorspace of 10,075 sqm GIA as shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2 – Existing floorspace within the application site (filtered)

Use Class Category	Existing floorspace (sqm GIA)
Class E - Convenience Retail	1,568
Class E - Comparison Retail	7,334
Class E - Retail Service	219
Class E - Leisure Service	338
Sui Generis	532
Vacant	86
TOTAL	10,075

Source: Appendix B.

- 3.5 Anglia Square's convenience retail offer is underpinned by the Iceland supermarket. Provision further includes two independent convenience stores (including a zero-waste

store), a greengrocer, two bakeries (including Greggs) and a family-run butcher. A limited range of convenience goods are also available within the Poundland store.

- 3.6 Comparison or non-food retail accounts for the highest proportion of floorspace within the application site. The largest retailers include QD (2,841 sqm GIA), Poundland (1,311 sqm GIA), Savers (285 sqm GIA) and Boots (219 sqm GIA).
- 3.7 Beyond these retailers, the comparison retail offer is predominantly characterised by charity shops (6) and second-hand shops (2) alongside a small number of more specialist independent stores including a bicycle shop, two gift shops and a clothes shop.
- 3.8 Anglia Square is currently lacking in retail and leisure services. Retail services are limited to a hairdresser and a barbers' shop, while there are no financial or professional services. Leisure provision includes a café and a fitness studio on Upper Green Street; in addition to two bookmakers, a nail salon and a tattooist (each Sui Generis).
- 3.9 Community facilities, including spaces for the local community to congregate and/or hold events, are also lacking apart from the outdoor public square.
- 3.10 There is no commercial leisure offer (following the closure of the Hollywood cinema in 2019) and consequently, there is no evening activity of note at Anglia Square.
- 3.11 Table 3 below provides a breakdown of existing unit sizes within the application site.

Table 3 – Existing unit sizes within the application site

Unit Size Range (sqm GIA)	Number of units
501 or more	4
251-500	4
151-250	5
101-150	10
100 or less	13

Source: Appendix B.

Notes: Analysis excludes the Sui Generis and vacant floorspace omitted from Table 2.

- 3.12 This analysis shows that Anglia Square comprises 4 large format stores (namely QD, Poundland, Iceland and the YMCA charity shop) together with 4 additional stores measuring 251-500 sqm GIA (namely Greggs, Savers, Scope and the bicycle shop). Most other units (23 in total) are smaller than 150 sqm GIA.
- 3.13 Anglia Square's larger format stores and multiple retailer line-up (including Poundland, Iceland, Savers and Boots) perform an 'anchor' role within the Large District Centre, helping to drive footfall and support the smaller, largely independent businesses.
- 3.14 The scheme also accommodates the area's main convenience retail offer and has an important value-led shopping function for the local community.
- 3.15 However, Anglia Square currently comprises a limited diversity of uses required to fulfil its role as a Large District Centre. There is considerable scope to improve the quality and mix of non-residential uses including retail and leisure (within the limitations of market demand as outlined in section 2) as well as services and community facilities, which are increasingly important functions of a district centre which caters for the day-to-day needs of its surrounding residential areas.

- 3.16 Magdalen Street – the other main element of the Large District Centre – has a broader mix of retail and leisure services. Its retail offer is almost exclusively independent and includes some larger format stores such as the Roys variety store measuring 2,290 sqm gross (with a bakery, a post office and a range of DIY, homeware, electrical and clothing items); Looses Emporium (1,220 sqm gross); Aladdin’s Cave (550 sqm gross); Anglian Furnishing Fabrics (320 sqm gross); and Three (310 sqm gross). There is also a Rileys sports bar (circa 1,300 sqm gross) above Roys.
- 3.17 Therefore, Magdalen Street offers some important local facilities as well as independent retailers specialising in antiques, art and furnishings.
- 3.18 The 2017 Greater Norwich town centres and retail study – comprising the Council’s most up-to-date assessment of the ‘needs’ of the northern Large District Centre – identifies *an opportunity for qualitative improvements to the convenience goods retail offer in Anglia Square/Magdalen Street district centre, owing to the current limited facilities for local residents, with the exception of a small Iceland store*⁵. Although some new convenience goods retailers (e.g. Ernie’s zero-waste store and the Afro Caribbean convenience store) have been introduced since 2017, it is broadly recognised that the redevelopment proposals for Anglia Square provide an opportunity to improve the quality of such provision. This is considered further in section 5 of this report.
- 3.19 Based on the foregoing, it is clear Anglia Square serves a limited but important purpose for the local community, predominantly in respect of its value-led retail offer. The scheme is lacking in services and community facilities and there is no evening economy of note, which has implications for safety and security in and around the site.
- 3.20 It contains most of the Large District Centre’s multiple retailers. Some but not all of these occupy the scheme’s larger format stores, which perform an anchor role and support other shops by generating footfall and activity. Magdalen Street also contains larger format stores albeit not the ‘brands’ currently accommodated at Anglia Square.
- 3.21 Like Magdalen Street, Anglia Square has a high proportion of independent businesses. These are generally focused within the scheme’s many smaller sized units.
- 3.22 Although maintaining the existing level of floorspace is not a viable and sustainable option for Weston Homes’ proposals, due to market conditions and the reality that the existing quantum is only supported due to ‘sub market’ rental levels while the site is being actively managed for redevelopment, there is clearly an opportunity to improve the quality and mix of main town centre and other related uses. Such an approach to town centre development and improvement is encouraged by the Greater Norwich town centres and retail study update (December 2020) as considered in section 4 below.

⁵ Paragraph 3.38.

4. Planning policy considerations

- 4.1 This section of the report sets out the planning policy considerations relevant to assessing the scale and nature of non-residential uses proposed as part of the Anglia Square redevelopment. It takes the form of a discussion around the adopted (and emerging) policy approach and the supporting evidence base, rather than a more conventional policy review which is provided in the Planning Statement accompanying this application.
- 4.2 There is an emerging development plan, the Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP) which is being prepared by Broadland DC, South Norfolk Council, NCC and Norfolk County Council, (the Partnership), that will supersede the Joint Core Strategy for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk (2014) (JCS) and Norwich Site Allocations and Site Specific Policies Local Plan (2014) (NSASSP) once adopted. The GNLP Reg 19 version was submitted to the Secretary of State for examination on 30th July 2021.
- 4.3 The examination process is underway, for which hearing sessions took place during February and March 2022. As a result of the hearings, many policies, including the emerging allocation for the Site were subject to debate, addressing their soundness and the consequential need for amendment, alongside requests for additional information by the Inspectors. It is therefore considered likely the Council will prepare and consult upon Modifications or at least minor changes to both policy text and supporting text, relevant to this application. This process, and the publication of the Inspectors' report may extend beyond the determination of this application, and so final GNLP policy wording may not be available at that stage.
- 4.4 Paragraph 48 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (NPPF) requires decision makers to give weight to relevant policies of emerging Local Plans according to the stage of preparation, the extent of unresolved objections, and the degree of consistency between emerging policies and the NPPF. In this instance, there are currently unresolved objections, in respect of some of which the Inspectors have requested additional information, and accordingly there are likely to be Modifications to some policies relevant to this application before they can be considered sound. On this basis, it is considered that in respect of those policies, the emerging development plan currently holds limited weight in decision making. In this context, those policies are not considered in detail.
- 4.5 Other policies relevant to this application, notably the *Town Centres* section of Policy 6 and criterion 3 of the policy allocation GNLP 0506, are likely to be the subject of Modifications reflecting the Weston Homes / CTI representations, on the basis these representations were broadly accepted by the Partnership during the hearings. It is therefore considered that these policies (incorporating the changes sought by Weston Homes / CTI as discussed further below) hold more weight in decision making.
- 4.6 The northern Large District Centre, which Anglia Square forms part of, is a town centre in NPPF terms (JCS Policy 19).
- 4.7 Paragraph 86(a) of the NPPF promotes the vitality and viability of town centres and requires that planning policies allow *them to grow and diversify in a way that can respond to rapid changes in the retail and leisure industries, allows a suitable mix of uses (including housing) and reflects their distinctive characters*.
- 4.8 JCS Policy 19 states that:
- The development of new retailing, services, offices and other town centre uses as defined by government guidance will be encouraged at a scale appropriate to the form and functions of the [hierarchy of centres].*

- 4.9 The Policy Guidance Note (PGN) for Anglia Square and surrounding area, published in March 2017, whilst ‘*produced in response to a particular form and nature of development*’ i.e. the Call in Scheme, comments that:
- Improvements to the quality and mix of retail, leisure and other main town centre uses at Anglia Square will be supported. These uses should be of a scale and nature proportionate to the role of a Large District Centre, as set out in the Joint Core Strategy [Policy 19]⁶.*
- 4.10 There is no defined ‘scale’ of main town centre uses that is required to serve the function of a Large District Centre; and scale is not a test set out in NPPF.
- 4.11 Development Management Policy DM20 (adopted in 2014) is concerned with managing change within the northern Large District Centre. The policy seeks to retain a minimum proportion of A1 retail uses within the defined retail frontages which, it considers, is necessary to support the continued retail function of the centre.
- 4.12 However, the evidence and policy advice contained within the Greater Norwich town centres and retail study update (December 2020) describes the Policy DM20 approach as ‘*out of date*’ for the following reasons:
- *recent changes to national policy mean that ... retail frontages no longer need to be defined and there is a direction of travel away from assuming that former Class A1 retail uses are the only sector to underpin town centre health.*
 - *even before the changes to national planning policy, the use of quantitative thresholds within town centre development management policies was becoming a blunt instrument. Justifying a particular level of (former) Class A1 retail units was prone with difficulties and could lead to unintended consequences. Notwithstanding the implications of Use Class E ... we consider that a move towards more qualitative assessment factors would now be more appropriate, focusing upon the character of the proposed use, its contribution to active street frontages, its contribution to the overall health of the centre⁷.*
- 4.13 The Council’s up-to-date evidence base therefore specifically warns against using quantitative thresholds to justify a particular scale of retail floorspace when assessing development proposals within the Large District Centre. It further recognises that:
- ...projects involving retail floorspace provision are likely to be driven towards qualitative improvements which could involve a combination of: (A) redevelopment of existing space in order to provide replacement retail floorspace which is suited to the modern needs of the retail sector; (B) re-purpose sites with existing floorspace in order to allow for a wider range of active land uses to maintain and enhance town centre health (including, in appropriate circumstances, the down-sizing of retail space)⁸.*
- 4.14 It is relevant, in this context, that the December 2020 study forecasts an over-supply of comparison retail floorspace in the Norwich Urban Area (circa -20,000 sqm net). Thus, the study indicates that an effective policy approach should *concentrate upon existing provision in terms of redevelopment, refurbishment/remodelling, and, in some instances, down-sizing and repurposing to other land uses appropriate to town centre environments⁹.*

⁶ Paragraph 7.29.

⁷ Paragraph 5.5.

⁸ Paragraph 4.54.

⁹ Paragraph 6.6.

- 4.15 Furthermore the 2017 Greater Norwich town centres and retail study, which comprises the most up-to-date assessment of the ‘needs’ of the northern Large District Centre, makes it clear that:

Although the Retail Study has identified no quantitative need for additional convenience goods retail floorspace to serve the Norwich urban area, there is an opportunity for qualitative improvements to the convenience goods retail offer in Anglia Square/Magdalen Street district centre, owing to the current limited facilities for local residents, with the exception of a small Iceland store. The scope for improvements will be dictated by the availability of land and premises in and around the district centre and the physical constraints of the centre. As such, this study does not dictate the form of additional provision, as this will be influenced by a suite of considerations at the development management stage and we also consider that qualitative improvements can be achieved in a number of ways¹⁰. (emphasised)

- 4.16 It was in the light of this up-to-date evidence base that Weston Homes / CTI made representations to GNLP Policy 7.1 section 2, inter alia, including where it promotes the *intensification of retail use on existing sites*, for which there is no justification.
- 4.17 Other parts of GNLP Policy 7.1 section 2 are more flexible, cognisant of changing market requirements, and consistent with both the evidence base and the NPPF. This includes where the policy states that, *The centre’s retail function will be supported as part of a complementary range of uses* and goes on to describe which types of retail and non-retail uses will be acceptable (most but not all¹¹ of which fall within the NPPF definition of main town centre uses).
- 4.18 The *Town Centres* section of GNLP Policy 6 includes a requirement for new main town centre uses to be *encouraged at a scale appropriate to the form and functions of the [hierarchy of centres]* (similar to the provisions of JCS Policy 19) within which the northern Large District Centre is identified as a ‘second tier’ centre below Norwich City Centre.
- 4.19 The policy adds that development should *avoid the loss of commercial premises or local services* to which Weston Homes / CTI made representations, submitting that this wording is ambiguous and in tension with the evidence set out within the Greater Norwich town centres and retail study update as identified previously.
- 4.20 The policy allocation GNLP 0506 (Land at and adjoining Anglia Square) is also likely to be the subject of Modifications, including criterion 3 which is most relevant to this report and reads as follows:
- A significantly improved retail/leisure offer providing a continuous active frontage between Magdalen Street and St Augustine’s Street.*
- 4.21 As submitted by Weston Homes / CTI, (summarised), the evidence base supports that proposals for Anglia Square should deliver ‘qualitative’ improvements to the retail/leisure offer alongside a complementary mix of uses. The representations also set out that the policy emphasis on *continuous active frontage* is not entirely compatible with the delivery of a *housing-led mixed-use development* (as promoted by GNLP Policy 7.1) and fails to recognise that ground floor residential uses would serve to generate footfall and activity, including in the evenings when the Large District Centre’s shops and other businesses may be closed.

¹⁰ Paragraph 3.38.

¹¹ Notably housing and education.

- 4.22 These representations to criterion 3 were broadly accepted by the Partnership during the hearings and therefore the policy allocation GNLP 0506 is likely to be the subject of Modifications incorporating those changes sought by Weston Homes / CTI.
- 4.23 Based on the foregoing, the direction of travel is clearly towards a policy approach which is focused on improvements to the quality of retail and leisure provision as part of a flexible, complementary mix of main town centre and other related uses. Development Management Policy DM20 is out-of-date and not relevant. This recognises the increasing emphasis on qualitative factors and the role of non-retail uses in ensuring the vitality of town centres, which prompted the introduction of Class E and the availability of additional permitted development rights.
- 4.24 Providing therefore it can be demonstrated that the scale and mix of non-residential uses proposed would meet the needs of the local community and ensure Anglia Square continues to play an important 'anchor' role within the Large District Centre, the proposals should be supported and should not be required to over-provide floorspace closer to existing levels, which would be neither sustainable nor justified in the current retail market – nor consistent with the evidence set out within the Greater Norwich town centres and retail study update.

5 The proposed vision for Anglia Square

- 5.1 In this section, we set out the vision for the non-residential uses proposed as part of the Anglia Square redevelopment and how this will support the function of the wider Large District Centre.
- 5.2 Weston Homes’ proposals seek to deliver a successful, appropriately scaled shopping and multi-purpose environment for the Large District Centre. Importantly, the scheme will provide a draw beyond ‘low value’ retail and introduce a range of other facilities and attractions currently not found locally, providing an enhanced offer and experience for local shoppers and other visitors to the northern part of the City Centre.
- 5.3 The new accommodation will be much better suited to the needs of tenants than is presently available at Anglia Square. It will therefore provide improved space for existing (retained) tenants and will be capable of attracting a broader mix of tenants and facilities, thus having a positive effect on nearby businesses and ensuring the scheme’s anchor role within the Large District Centre.

Proposed non-residential floorspace

- 5.4 Table 4 sets out the proposed non-residential floorspace by block.
- 5.5 Blocks A-M comprise the part of the scheme designed in full and will accommodate non-residential floorspace totalling 5,808 sqm NIA (6,453 sqm GIA). A maxima figure is given for the Outline Application Blocks (E – J), which will be the subject of later detailed design as a Reserved Matters application.

Table 4 – Proposed non-residential floorspace by block

Blocks	Proposed floorspace (sqm NIA)	Proposed floorspace (sqm GIA)
Block A	1,286	1,429
Block D	726	807
Block J3	427	474
Block K/L	2,774	3,082
Block M	595	661
<i>Outline Application Blocks (E – J)</i>	2,192	2,436
TOTAL	8,000	8,889

Notes: Assumes 90% NIA:GIA ratio.

- 5.6 The proposed non-residential floorspace therefore represents a reduction of 1,186 sqm GIA on existing levels as indicated in Table 2 in section 3 above. This is a relatively modest quantum of floorspace, we consider, and the reduction would be more than offset by other ‘qualitative’ aspects of the scheme as described below.

Proposed scheme mix and design considerations

- 5.7 Table 5 sets out the proposed non-residential floorspace by use. This identifies the mix of uses proposed for the detailed part of the scheme as well as the flexibility sought for the Outline Application Blocks (E – J).

Table 5 – Proposed non-residential floorspace by use

Use Class	Description	Proposed floorspace	
		(sqm NIA)	(sqm GIA)
Class E(a)	New foodstore (Block M)	512	569
Class E(a)	Large format store (Block A)	798	887
Class E(a)	Large format store (Block K/L)	748	831
Class E(a)	Large format store (Block K/L)	290	322
Class F2(b)	Community Hub (Block D)	579	643
Class F2(b)	Community Hall (Block D)	147	163
Sui Generis public conveniences	WC / Changing Places (Block A)	51	57
Class E(a-g) plus Sui Generis drinking establishments with expanded food provision/ bookmakers/ nail bars/ dry cleaners	Flexible commercial and other non-residential uses (Blocks A, J3, K/L and M)	2,683	2,981
Class E(a-g) plus Sui Generis drinking establishments with expanded food provision/ bookmakers/ nail bars/ dry cleaners	Flexible commercial and other non-residential uses (Blocks E – J)	2,192	2,436
TOTAL		8,000	8,889

Notes: Proposed planning conditions (below) will control the quantum of Sui Generis floorspace.

- 5.8 Weston Homes' strategy for the new shopping and multi-purpose environment seeks to deliver the following:

New foodstore

- 5.9 A new, modern foodstore will be provided with a dedicated service yard. The foodstore will be highly prominent on the north side of the new public square and will have frontage to both Beckham Place and Annes Arcade, which connects with Magdalen Street to the east.
- 5.10 The foodstore will perform an important anchor role and help to sustain other shops and businesses within the Large District Centre. It would also encourage footfall and activity into the evening, thereby improving the safety and security of the area.
- 5.11 The end-user is unknown at present but the proposed scale (569 sqm GIA) has been informed by retail agency discussions and is likely to comprise a national grocer not currently represented in the area. The foodstore will be of a scale and format suitable for a weekly or more regular shop, serving the convenience-based needs of the local community and other passers-by (such as commuters and those walking to/from Norwich City Centre or nearby bus stops).
- 5.12 It will therefore address the qualitative 'deficiency' in the Large District Centre's convenience retail offer as identified by the 2017 Greater Norwich town centres and retail study.

Large format stores

- 5.13 Three large format stores (additional to the new foodstore) will be delivered within the detailed part of the scheme. These will be located along the main retail circuit between Magdalen Street and St Augustine's Street, with two of the stores fronting directly onto the new public square.
- 5.14 Within the scheme, as at present, these large format stores will accommodate strong retail anchors and provide suitable relocation options for Iceland, Poundland, Boots and/or other existing tenants.

- 5.15 It is envisaged (but not confirmed) that Iceland would be retained within Block K/L and complement the new additional foodstore. The largest store within Block K/L measures 831 sqm GIA which is larger than the existing Iceland (665 sqm GIA). This new store would be serviced from the Block M service yard to the north.
- 5.16 It is further envisaged (but not confirmed) that Poundland would be retained within the 887 sqm GIA store within Block A. This is smaller than Poundland's existing store (1,311 sqm GIA) but will comprise modern, more efficient floorspace and will be capable of driving footfall and activity into the scheme. The new store would be serviced directly from Edward Street to the north.
- 5.17 The other larger format store measuring 322 sqm GIA within Block K/L would provide suitable accommodation for Boots to potentially upscale, or for another retail anchor.

Community facilities

- 5.18 The scheme will deliver some important community facilities that would be unique to the area and serve as a focal point for the Large District Centre.
- 5.19 The proposed Community Hub comprises 493 sqm GIA at ground floor level and 150 sqm GIA at first floor with its own stairs and lift. It will have several functions, to include offering on-site residents a managed collection service for parcel and food shop deliveries. This would improve the convenience-based function of the scheme and reduce disruption from deliveries in and around the site.
- 5.20 In addition, the Community Hub will serve as a meeting place for the wider community, potentially incorporating a café/kitchenette and 'drop down' desk space for hire. It is proposed that a Community Hub Management Plan will be prepared and agreed with the Council prior to the occupation of this facility.
- 5.21 The building has been designed and positioned on the edge of the scheme, fronting New Botolph Street, to maximise its proximity and accessibility to – and therefore use by – surrounding residents. It will also provide active frontage to Botolph Street and strengthen the vibrancy of this main thoroughfare towards St Augustine's Street.
- 5.22 The proposed Community Hall (163 sqm GIA) would be available for hire to both on-site residents and the wider community. It would provide an additional meeting place for events, yoga and after-school classes, etc. Bookings would be made through the concierge.
- 5.23 Replacement public toilets (WC) of a high standard are also proposed, together with a new specialist 'Changing Places' facility, to serve shoppers and other users of the scheme. These public conveniences will be co-located within Block A off Beckham Place.

Public house

- 5.24 A public house (with expanded food provision) is proposed to create an additional focal point within the scheme. There will be opportunities for outside dining.
- 5.25 The end-user is currently unknown but will be a good quality, family-friendly independent operator, addressing a 'gap' in the local offer. The pub would be open during the day and into the evening when most shops and other businesses would be closed to encourage activity and dwell time.

Flexible commercial space

- 5.26 With regards to the 2,981 sqm GIA flexible commercial and other non-residential uses proposed within the detailed part of the scheme, as identified in Table 5 above, this includes flexibility for uses within the broad Class E and for some specific Sui Generis uses.

- 5.27 The current scheme has a limited number of quasi-retail Sui Generis uses and the commercial strategy for Weston Homes' proposals seeks to re-provide these uses (namely bookmakers and nail bars) with some flexibility for additional provision of modest scale. Reflecting the residential-led nature of the Anglia Square redevelopment, the proposals also include opportunities for a limited quantum of other Sui Generis uses (namely dry cleaners and drinking establishments with expanded food provision) for which there is likely to be demand from the new on-site residents and indeed the wider community.
- 5.28 Planning conditions are proposed later in this section to control the quantum of these Sui Generis uses.
- 5.29 The ground floor flexible commercial and other non-residential uses proposed within the detailed part of the scheme will be located along the main retail circuit between Magdalen Street and St Augustine's Street (amongst the new foodstore and other large format stores); along Beckham Place and Annes Arcade; along the Magdalen Street frontage including the Stump Cross building (as considered below); and along Edward Street to help activate this 'edge' of the scheme.
- 5.30 These will comprise smaller sized units (typically ranging between 80-140 sqm GIA) – which fall within the current scheme's most prominent unit size banding¹² – together with some slightly larger formats, notably the units within Block J3 (circa 237 sqm GIA) and Block K/L (circa 208 sqm GIA). Block J3 is a potential location for a gymnasium subject to operator requirements.
- 5.31 Of the 2,981 sqm GIA flexible commercial and other non-residential uses, around 10% (312 sqm GIA) is proposed at first floor level above and behind the units fronting Magdalen Street¹³. This will be suitable for office/workspace in the form of small 'start up' units.
- 5.32 With regards to the outline part of the scheme (Blocks E – J), maximum flexibility is sought for Class E and specific Sui Generis uses up to 2,436 sqm GIA. Such flexibility will be necessary given the longer-term delivery timeframes, allowing the scheme to adapt to changing market requirements. The ground floor units will also be designed so they can be sub-divided or amalgamated subject to tenant demand.
- 5.33 The scale and nature of flexible commercial and other non-residential uses proposed will therefore help to future-proof the scheme and ensure the delivery of a complementary mix of uses to support the role and function of the Large District Centre.

Stump Cross 'gateway' and multi-purpose building

- 5.34 The Stump Cross building will be an important gateway into the scheme from Magdalen Street. It will extend over ground and three upper floor levels. Whilst flexibility is sought for a mix of potential uses (comprising the flexible commercial and other non-residential uses proposed for the detailed part of the scheme), it is envisaged that the ground floor of the building could accommodate a café which would activate the entrance to the scheme.
- 5.35 The top floor could accommodate a restaurant, taking advantage of the views south towards Norwich Cathedral and the City Centre, while the middle two floors could comprise office/workspace or a gymnasium. Such uses would generate activity both during the daytime and into the evening, attracting users that would otherwise perhaps not visit the Large District Centre for shopping and services.

¹² Refer to Appendix B and the analysis set out in Table 3 above.

¹³ Excluding the Stump Cross building.

Multi-functional public square

- 5.36 A new public square will be situated in the heart of the scheme, along the main retail circuit between Magdalen Street and St Augustine's Street. This will be slightly larger than the existing square and will offer a vibrant outdoor space for residents and visitors alike.
- 5.37 The new foodstore and other retail and flexible commercial space will be focused around the square. It will incorporate predominantly hard landscaping and some seating to create an adaptable space for 'pop-up' leisure uses, temporary markets and other events.
- 5.38 As set out below, it is proposed that the public realm (including the public square) will be subject to a Public Realm Access Plan within the S106 agreement. This will seek to ensure that the public realm is welcoming and capable of supporting Anglia Square's important role within the northern Large District Centre.

Proposed planning conditions and S106 obligations

- 5.39 Weston Homes would be agreeable to a series of planning conditions to control the scale and nature of the non-residential uses proposed and, ultimately, to give effect to the vision described above. These could include:
- i. provision of the new foodstore (Block M) measuring 569 sqm GIA within delivery phase one;
 - ii. restricting the sale of non-food goods within the new foodstore to no more than 20% of the net sales area;
 - iii. provision of the large format store (Block A), Community Hub, Community Hall, and the WC / Changing Places facility within delivery phase one;
 - iv. provision of the large format stores (Block K/L) within delivery phase two;
 - v. limiting the provision of Sui Generis drinking establishments with expanded food provision, bookmakers and/or nail bars within the entire scheme to no more than 550 sqm NIA (611 sqm GIA);
 - vi. limiting the provision of Sui Generis dry cleaners within the entire scheme to no more than 150 sqm NIA (167 sqm GIA);
 - vii. controls (to be agreed) to ensure the provision of a range of appropriately scaled units beyond the new foodstore and other large format stores.
- 5.40 These planning conditions have regard to those agreed with the Council in respect of the Call in Scheme whilst reflecting the greater need for flexibility (due to prevailing market conditions) and the larger site area. Essentially, they seek to ensure the delivery of some key scheme 'benefits' within the early operational stages and we would welcome further discussion with the Council to agree these.
- 5.41 It is further proposed that other aspects of the scheme can be secured through S106 obligations, requiring the following Plans to be submitted to the Council for approval prior to the commencement and/or occupation of development:
- i. Community Hub Management Plan – setting out how the Community Hub (and the Community Hall) will operate and be managed on a day-to-day basis;
 - ii. Anglia Square Management Plan – outlining arrangements for engagement with the scheme's existing tenants during the construction period;

iii. Public Realm Access Plan – setting out how the public realm will be managed and maintained for use by the public.

5.42 The requirement for these Plans (excluding the Community Hub Management Plan) was agreed with the Council in respect of the Call in Scheme and we would welcome further discussion on these in due course.

6 Phasing and construction-related impacts

- 6.1 The comprehensive redevelopment of Anglia Square will impact on the function of the current scheme during the construction period. However, it will be in Weston Homes' interest to ensure the shopping centre performs as well as possible and continues to serve an important role for the local community.
- 6.2 The phasing strategy set out and described in the Design & Access Statement accompanying this application has been developed with consideration for minimising the disruption to existing tenants and the wider Large District Centre; and maximising the opportunities for key tenants to be relocated into new accommodation as and when each phase is brought forward (thereby ensuring those tenants can continue trading and supporting the role of the Large District Centre).
- 6.3 Accordingly, in phase one, the northern part of the site (comprising the existing multi-storey car park and the units below) would be cleared and Blocks A, B, C, D and M delivered. As mentioned in section 5, this delivery phase would include, inter alia, the provision of the new foodstore and another large format store, Community Hub, Community Hall, and the WC / Changing Places facility.
- 6.4 Phase two would involve the demolition of the 'cinema block' and the buildings on the western side of Magdalen Street, where Poundland is currently accommodated. However, phase two would not commence until phase one is completed. The phasing strategy will therefore facilitate the relocation of Poundland (or another retail anchor) into the large format store within Block A, together with several other opportunities for existing tenants to be relocated.
- 6.5 In delivery phase two, the other large format stores (Block K/L) and a range of smaller sized units will come forward. This would allow tenants of the later phases, comprising the outline part of the scheme, (potentially including Iceland, Boots and Greggs), to be relocated into new accommodation within phase two. This phase would also see the delivery of the Stump Cross building which will have an important 'gateway' and multi-purpose function, and significantly enhance the scheme's relationship with Magdalen Street and therefore the wider Large District Centre.
- 6.6 Overall, as many of the existing tenants as possible will remain open and accessible during the construction period. The Anglia Square Management Plan will include arrangements for Weston Homes' engagement with and support for the scheme's tenants during the construction period, while the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) will set out measures for ensuring that shoppers and other visitors have safe and legible access to remaining businesses. For each phase, the CEMP will clearly define the pedestrian routes across the site and the wayfinding signage to support this. Maintaining a convenient route between Magdalen Street and St Augustine's Street will be an objective of the CEMP and, to that end, Weston Homes would accept a planning condition which would require that the CEMP is submitted for the Council's approval prior to the implementation of each phase.
- 6.7 The approach outlined above and supported by the phasing plans included within the Design & Access Statement will ensure that the local community continues to have, insofar as practically possible, access to the scheme for shopping and services. The phasing strategy will therefore help to maintain the role of Anglia Square during the construction period.

6.8 Furthermore, the existing public square will remain open and accessible during phases one and two. The works to the new public square will be completed within phase three, with the public square and all buildings fronting onto it expected to be completed in Q1 2028.

7 Summary and conclusions

- 7.1 This Commercial Strategy & Main Town Centre Uses Report has been prepared by CPW Planning on behalf of Weston Homes Plc in support of a hybrid planning application for the comprehensive redevelopment of Anglia Square.
- 7.2 As part of the redevelopment proposals, all existing retail accommodation will be demolished and replaced with an appropriate scale and mix of main town centre and other related uses, which will ensure the continued role of Anglia Square within the Large District Centre.
- 7.3 The retail and leisure market has changed significantly since the submission of the Call in Scheme in 2018. The commercial strategy underpinning the non-residential uses has been re-set in response to this, including some critical ‘demand driver’ changes, notably the exclusion of the cinema, hotel and public multi-storey car park.
- 7.4 The proposed reduction in non-residential floorspace (compared with existing levels) is relatively modest and would be more than offset by other ‘qualitative’ aspects of the scheme.
- 7.5 In this report, we have:
- outlined the changes in the retail market since the Call in Scheme;
 - assessed the current role and function of Anglia Square as part of the Large District Centre;
 - identified the planning policy considerations relevant to assessing the scale and nature of non-residential uses proposed as part of the Anglia Square redevelopment;
 - described the proposed vision for these uses and how this will support the function of the wider Large District Centre; and
 - set out how the phasing strategy will help to maintain the role of Anglia Square during the construction period.
- 7.6 Maintaining the ‘status quo’ is not a viable and sustainable option. The Weston Homes redevelopment proposals will deliver a significantly improved shopping and multi-purpose environment for the Large District Centre, providing better quality accommodation for tenants and responding to the needs of the local community and new on-site residents.
- 7.7 In conjunction with the justification set out in the accompanying Planning Statement we therefore conclude that the proposals should be supported.

Appendix A

Proposed Masterplan Drawings



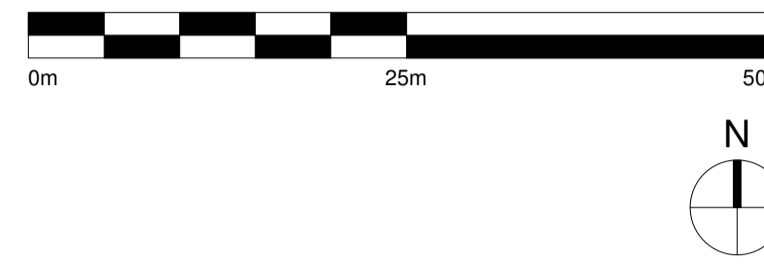
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Structural Design: Subject to structural input & coordination
Services Design: Subject to services input & coordination
Fire Strategy: Subject to fire input & coordination

— Application Boundary
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Revision	Date	Drawn By	Description
00-1	31.03.22		Issued for Planning

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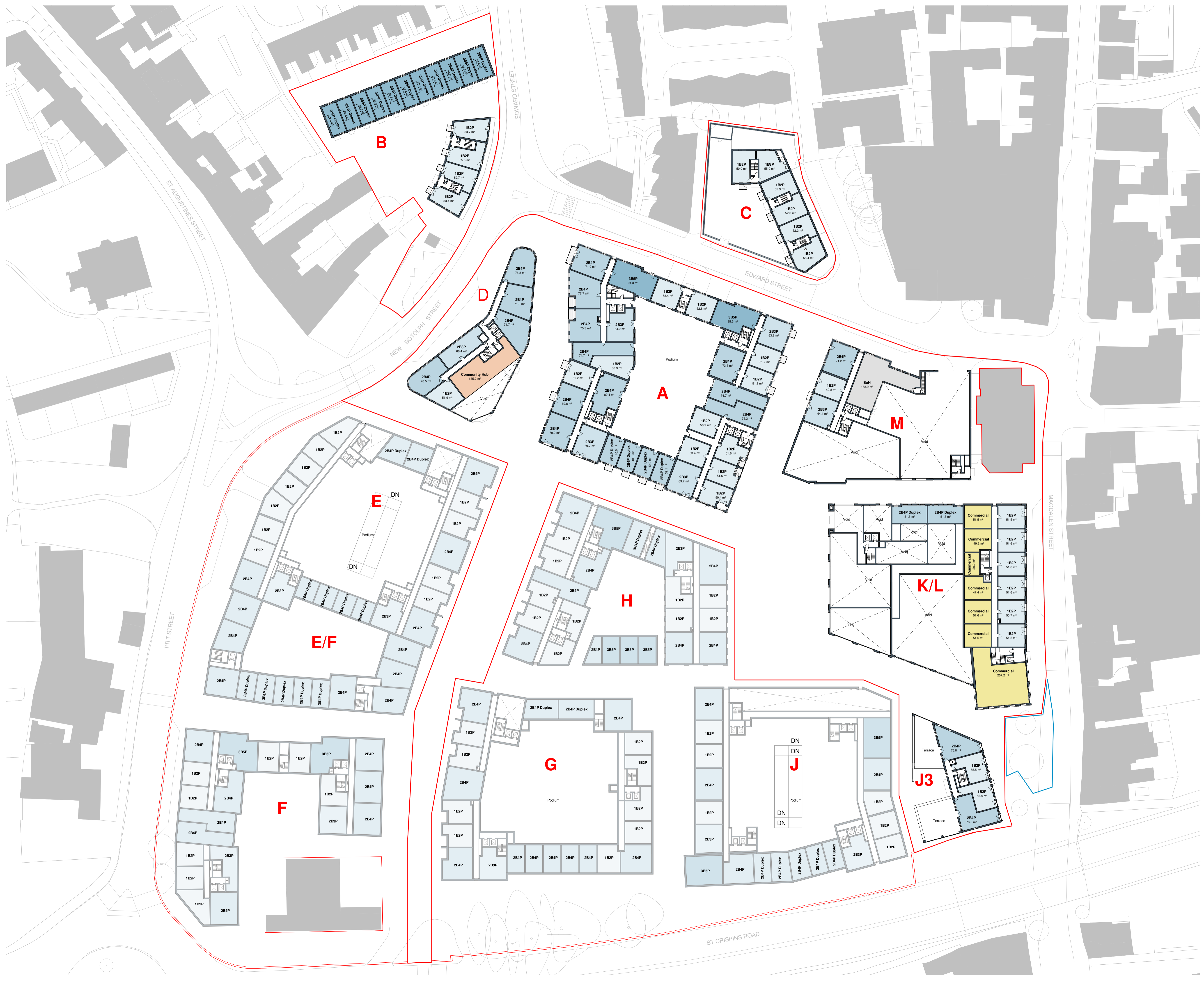
Client
Weston Homes

Project
**Anglia Square
 Norwich**

Description
**Masterplan
 Level 00**

Status
WORK-IN-PROGRESS

Scale	Drawn By	Date
1:500@A1	BM	26.01.22
Job Number	Drawing Number	Revision
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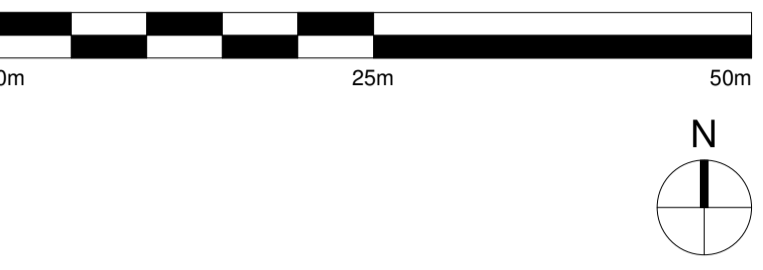
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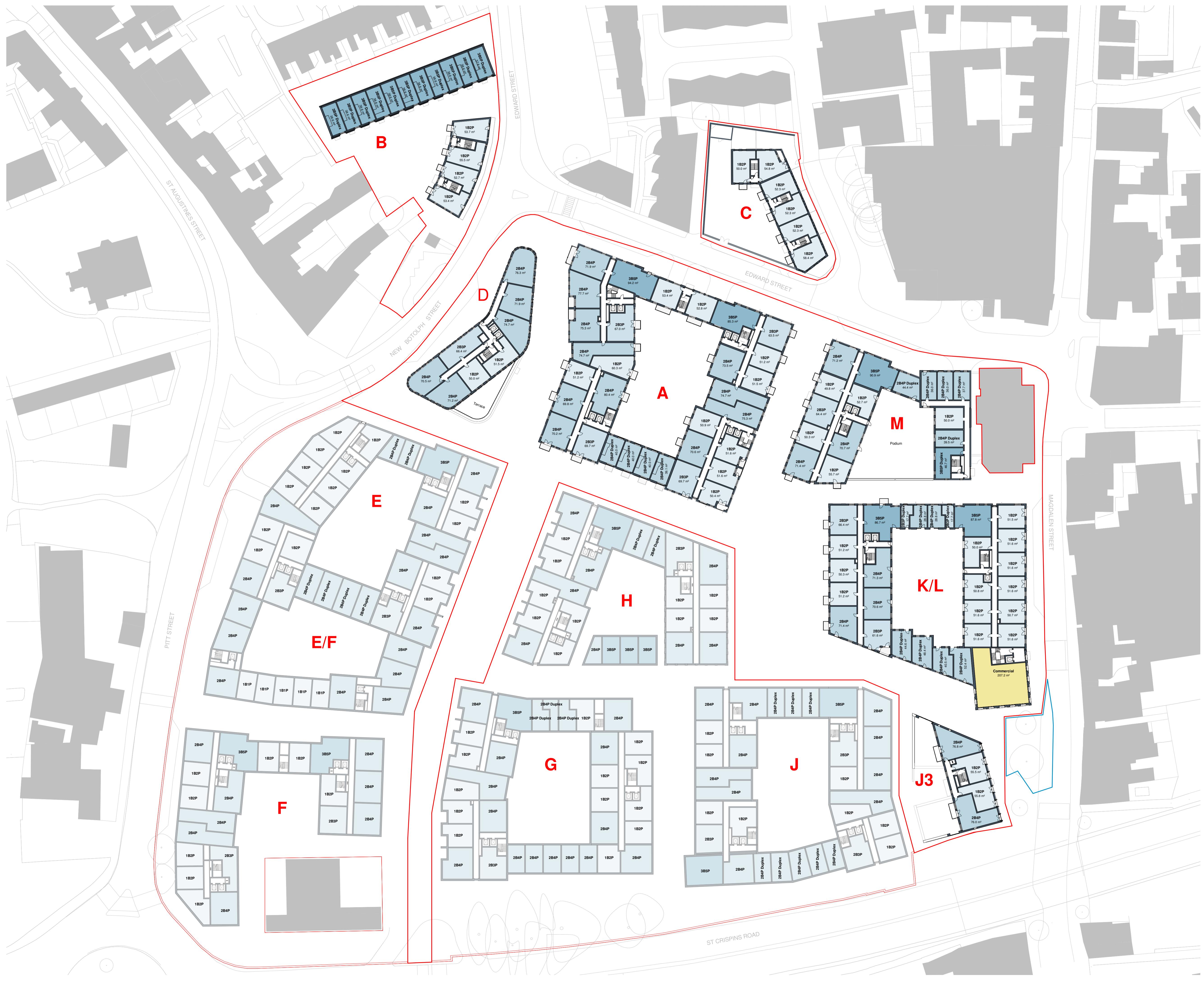
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Client
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 Project
**Anglia Square
 Norwich**
 Description
**Masterplan
 Level 01**

Status
WORK-IN-PROGRESS
 Scale 1:500@A1
 Drawn By BM
 Date 08.02.22
 Job Number 35301
 Drawing Number ZZ-01-DR-A-01-0101
 Revision D0-1



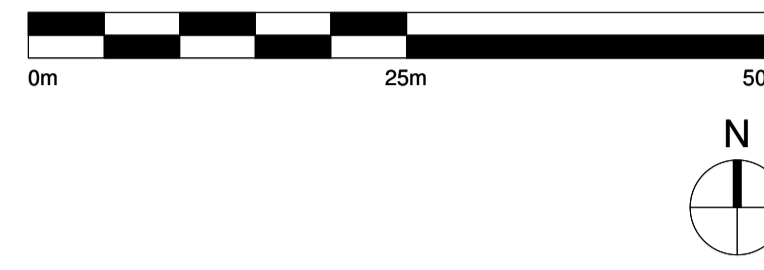
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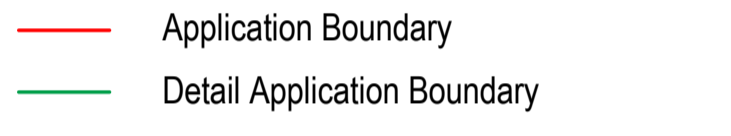
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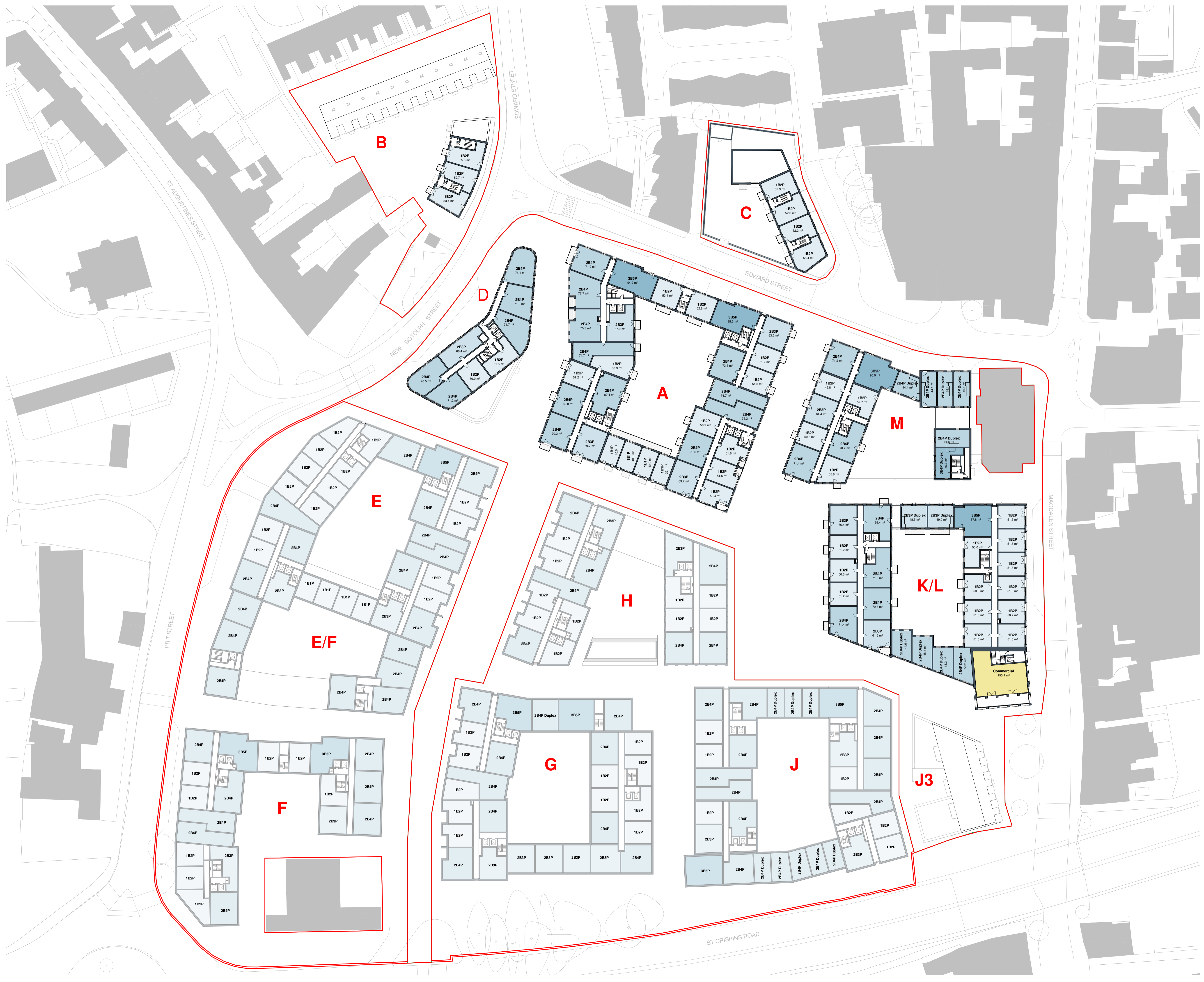
Client
Weston Homes

Project
**Anglia Square
 Norwich**

Description
**Masterplan
 Level 02**

Status
WORK-IN-PROGRESS

Scale	Drawn By	Date
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Job Number	Drawing Number	Revision
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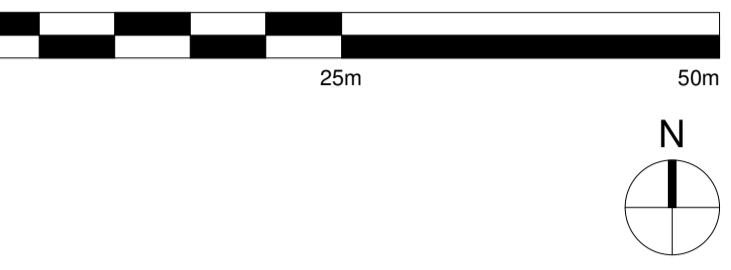
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**Anglia Square
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 Description
**Masterplan
 Level 03**

Status
WORK-IN-PROGRESS
 Scale 1:500@A1
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 Date 19.01.22
 Job Number 35301
 Drawing Number ZZ-03-DR-A-01-0103
 Revision D0-1

Appendix B

Existing Tenancy and Floorspace Schedule

Table A: Anglia Square tenancy and floorspace schedule

Unit Address	Tenant	Floor Area (sqm GIA)	Use Description	Use Category	Notes
1/3 Anglia Square	Iceland	665	Supermarket	Convenience Retail	Within extended site area
4/5 Anglia Square	Greggs	342	Bakery	Convenience Retail	Within extended site area
6 Anglia Square	PACT	209	Charity Shop	Comparison Retail	
7/10 Anglia Square	QD	2841	Household Goods	Comparison Retail	
21/22 Anglia Square	Boots	219	Chemist	Comparison Retail	
13/14 Anglia Square	Priscilla Bacon Hospice	143	Charity Shop	Comparison Retail	
15 Anglia Square	Café on the Corner	95	Café	Leisure Service	
18/23 Anglia Square	Anglia Square Cars	922	Car Sales	Sui Generis	
24 Anglia Square	Ernie's Zero Waste Shop	95	Convenience Store	Convenience Retail	
25 Anglia Square	Sutton Toys	114	Second Hand Toys	Comparison Retail	
26 Anglia Square	Foodbycpc	114	Convenience Store	Convenience Retail	
27 Anglia Square	Savers	285	Health & Beauty	Comparison Retail	
28 Anglia Square	Timberhill Bakery	114	Bakery	Convenience Retail	
29/34 Anglia Square	YMCA	675	Charity Shop	Comparison Retail	
1A Sovereign Way	Be Active Mobility	95	Mobility Equipment	Sui Generis	Within extended site area
1B Sovereign Way	Preeminence	133	Barbers	Retail Service	Within extended site area
2 Sovereign Way	Sense	162	Charity Shop	Comparison Retail	Within extended site area
3 Sovereign Way	Betfred	124	Betting Office	Sui Generis	Within extended site area
4 Sovereign Way	St Martins Housing Trust	143	Charity Shop	Comparison Retail	Within extended site area
5 Sovereign Way	Card Factory	143	Greeting Cards	Comparison Retail	Within extended site area
6 Sovereign Way	[void]	10	[void]	Vacant	Within extended site area
7/8 Sovereign Way	Scope	266	Charity Shop	Comparison Retail	Within extended site area
9 Sovereign Way	Regenerating Gaming	114	Computer Games	Comparison Retail	Within extended site area
10 Sovereign Way	Brands Fruit & Veg	143	Greengrocer	Convenience Retail	Within extended site area
FF 1/5 Sovereign Way [1]	The Hamlet Centre Trust	705	Charitable Organisation	Sui Generis	Within extended site area
13 Botolph Way	Peter's Family Butcher	95	Butcher	Convenience Retail	
14/15 Botolph Way	Ladbrokes	152	Betting Office	Sui Generis	
16 Botolph Way	[void]	76	[void]	Vacant	
17 Botolph Way	Marmalade	76	Second Hand Clothing	Comparison Retail	
1 Annes Walk	Handmade Gifts & Gallery	86	Crafts & Gifts	Comparison Retail	
2/4 Annes Walk	Bicycle Links	447	Bicycle Shop	Comparison Retail	
82 Magdalen Street	Handmade with Love	38	Crafts & Gifts	Comparison Retail	
84 Magdalen Street	Odon Fashion Talks	67	Clothing & Footwear	Comparison Retail	
FF 82/84 Mag. Street [1]	[void]	141	[void]	Vacant	
86 Magdalen Street	Skin Changes	86	Tattooist	Sui Generis	
88 Magdalen Street	UK Nails (Quoc Hung Tran)	76	Nail Salon	Sui Generis	
90/96 Mag. Street	Poundland	1311	Variety Store	Comparison Retail	
FF Former Nightclub [2]	[void]	958	[void]	Vacant	
98 Magdalen Street	Hair Care	86	Hairdresser	Retail Service	
47/51 Pitt Street [3]	Men's Shed	500	Charitable Organisation	Sui Generis	
53/55 Pitt Street [3]	Print to the People	500	Printing Studio	Sui Generis	
57/61 Pitt Street [2]	Danyar Super Shine	583	Car Wash & Repairs	Sui Generis	
FF Former Cinema [2]	[void]	2577	[void]	Vacant	
1 Upper Green Street [1]	Life Fitness Studio	243	Fitness Studio	Leisure Service	
41/43/45 Pitt Street [1]	Norwich Co-operative Arts	455	Arts Studio	Sui Generis	
		17415			

Notes:

Tenant names based on Horizon's Glance Report (January 2022).

Schedule excludes Sovereign House and Gildengate House.

Floor areas derived from the Experian Goad survey of Anglia Square (September 2021) unless otherwise indicated.

[1] Floor areas derived from Horizon's Glance Report.

[2] Floor areas derived from the Statement of Common Ground between Norwich City Council and the Applicant in relation to the previous scheme.

[3] Floor areas estimated by CPW Planning.

Table B: Anglia Square summary floorspace schedule

Use Category	Floor Area (sqm GIA)
Convenience Retail	1568
Comparison Retail	7334
Retail Service	219
Leisure Service	338
Sui Generis	4196
Vacant	3762
	17415