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NEWS

Former bingo club site could be transformed into student flats

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The former Mecca Bingo site in the heart of Norwich could be turned into a 230-bed development of student flats.

The site, opposite John Lewis in All Saints Green, has been empty for five years, following the demolition of the former bingo hall.

London-based Alumno Developments has lodged an application with Norwich City Council for the flats, which would be specifically for students.

If planning permission for the project, known as The Quad, is

“The proposals would regenerate a vacant site and bring further life into the northern half of All Saints Green

David Campbell, Alumno Developments

granted, the development would be the company's second in Norwich, following the 220-bedroom development next to Norwich bus station. It opened its doors to Norwich University of the Arts students last September.

David Campbell, managing director at Alumno, said: “We are really pleased to be bringing forward another significant investment in the city centre. This development will provide state-of-the-art accommodation for students coming to study in Norwich, and offer an alternative to existing homes.

“The proposals would regenerate a vacant site and bring further life into the northern half of All Saints Green.



■ Above, flashback to when Mecca Bingo was on All Saints Green. Left, a proposed sketch for new student housing at the former Mecca Bingo site.

Pictures:
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“Students are an integral part of Norwich's economy and diverse community. This development will contribute to that rich vibrancy

whilst creating more jobs and supporting local businesses.

“We look forward to hearing people's views about our plans, and

would encourage as many people as possible to get in touch to tell us what they think.”

The development would be a car-free scheme. All Saints Green is set to be turned into a public open space, with the road closed off to all traffic except pedestrians and bicycles.

A decision whether to grant permission will be made in the coming months by the city council's planning committee.

→ **What do you think of the proposal? Write, giving full contact details, to Letters Editor, Prospect House, Rouen Road, Norwich NR1 1RE or email eveningnewsletters@archant.co.uk**

Man is jailed after sending explicit texts

A man who sent explicit text messages to a 14-year-old girl has been jailed for 16 months and placed on the sex offender's register.

Gary Shearer, 31, of Wroxham Road, Sprowston, was arrested after the girl's mother became aware of sexual messages he had sent her daughter and contacted police about the matter, Norwich Crown Court heard.

John Morgans, prosecuting, said that Shearer had sent the girl a number of sexually explicit texts and had asked if she liked older men.

He said that in an impact statement the girl said that the messages had left her feeling anxious and more cautious about meeting people.

Shearer admitted inciting a child to engage in sexual activity.

Jailing him, Judge Anthony Bate accepted that no actual physical abuse took place but said: “It is plain from your explicit text messages that it was something that appeared to be on your mind and she found it understandably distressing.”

Michael Clare, for Shearer, said he had a number of mental health problems and said: “He pleaded guilty at the earliest opportunity and has expressed his remorse.”

He added: “He may have misinterpreted things.”

Arrest in airport hacking probe

A man from Dover has been released on bail after he was arrested in connection with the hacking of Norwich Airport's website.

The Norfolk and Suffolk Cyber and Serious Crime Department has been investigating last October's incident.

The 29-year-old from Dover was bailed until June.

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