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# 13-storey student accommodation city-centre blocks receive approval

The old Mecca Bingo site has been vacant for some time and now permission has been granted to develop it. **LAUREN COPE** reports

The Norwich skyline is set to change after a vision for a 13-storey tower block housing students in the city centre was given the go-ahead.

The 244-bedroom student accommodation – made up of five connected blocks ranging from eight to 13 storeys – will be built on the former Mecca Bingo site, opposite John Lewis, in All Saints Green.

Norwich City Council's planning committee yesterday green-lighted the scheme despite objections from nearby insurers Aviva, who said the development would both affect working conditions of its employees and have a "harmful



■ Keith Driver, who supported the application for the student accommodation.

impact" on townscape.

Speaking at the meeting, Edward Jinks, who works at Aviva, said: "I would like to emphasise that we do strongly support the principle of develop-



■ The former bingo building site in All Saints Green. Picture: DENISE BRADLEY

ment of this site. It will provide much-needed student housing in the city centre."

But he said the company felt the height of the building was "excessive" and said it should be reduced to 11 storeys.

It is thought that the flats could be opened by 2018, though it is not yet clear at which university they would be studying.

Councillor Keith Driver said: "For someone who was born in Norwich and can remember the Norwich Union offices, which were larger than anything in the area, I can't see a problem with this."

"I don't see that an extra two or three storeys makes much difference."

## No affordable homes

A scheme for 37 apartments in Norwich has been approved – despite providing no affordable units. Wensum Homes' bid for the dwellings on Duke Street was unanimously approved by the committee yesterday. Councillors heard that a viability test found it was

not suitable to have any affordable homes included. Simeon Jackson, ward member, spoke on behalf of residents, raising their concerns about the narrow pavement and the "bulky buildings", which they do not feel fit in with the area.

The building would be broken into five to eight en-suite flats with a shared kitchen area.

There would also be a two-storey communal area.

### What do you think of the plans

for the site in All Saints Green? Write, giving full contact details, to Letters Editor, Eastern Daily Press, Prospect House, Rouen Road, Norwich, NR1 1RE or email [EDPletters@archant.co.uk](mailto:EDPletters@archant.co.uk)

## Expansion bid for chain store is given the green light



■ An architect's image of the proposed new Primark. Inset, how the area currently looks. Picture: TRG ARCHITECTS

A major retailer's plans for growth in the city centre have been passed.

An extra shopping floor will now be added to Primark, on Haymarket, while neighbouring shops Wallis and Dorothy Perkins will be rebuilt and taken over by the fashion chain.

Heritage watchdog the Norwich Society had previously opposed the bid, calling it "insensitive" and not fitting with the Norwich city centre conservation area.

Yesterday, Norwich city councillor Hugo Malik said it was disappointing to not see two independent stores take over the units.

Councillor Simeon Jackson echoed the Norwich Society's comments, but said revamped facades at the shop's Haymarket and White Lion Street entrances would be better than what was currently on display.

## IN BRIEF

### Author's novel to be discussed

**OLD BUCKENHAM:** The Old Buckenham Church Rooms will be hosting a meeting of a Jane Austen Group on Monday from 10am. It will be discussing the novel Mansfield Park. Anyone is welcome to attend what the group call a very informal meeting. The group has been set up by resident Tim Bornett, who said Monday's meeting about the author's work will be a fun and educational one.

### Popular entertainer to get them laughing

**ATTLEBOROUGH:** One of Norfolk's best-loved entertainers will perform at Connaught Hall on September 17 from 7.30pm. The Olly Day Laughter Show promises to be a fun-filled evening, with proceeds going to the hall. Tickets are £10; call 07780 600945 to book.



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