

Planning Advisory Group: report to Walberswick Parish Council

DC/22/0014/FUL

Vine Cottage, The Green, Walberswick, IP18 6TX

To convert existing garage, currently used for storage, into a dining room. Replacing existing garage door with bifold doors to match existing.

06/02/2022

1. Opinion

In the opinion of the Planning Advisory Group the proposed works are detrimental to the property, the Conservation Area (a designated heritage asset) and should be **refused**.

2. Description

Vine Cottage is prominently located to the east side of The Green; an area described in the Walberswick Conservation Appraisal as being "The heart of the Village". It is also the heart of the Conservation Area.

Originally the plot contained two, modest, 19th century brick built cottages.

The plot has been subject to a series of extensions which have diluted the modest form of the cottages. An extensive planning history exists for the site.

In 1989 an application to extend the cottages to both sides, and the rear, was granted Approval.

In 2017 an application to add a first floor to these extensions was permitted. The freestanding Southern side extension was also linked to the main body of the cottages.

The footprint of the two original cottages has been extended by approximately 180% and all combined into one dwelling,

It is now proposed to convert the integral garage into living accommodation. The alteration will entail removal of the garage door and replacement with a contemporary, triple folding glazed door.

The front wall will be clad in stained timber. Two large ground floor gable windows are also proposed to the north elevation. The windows will be less than one metre from the solid gable wall of the neighbouring property.

3. Policy background

Three policies from the Local Plan are particularly relevant here; Policy SCLP 11.5 (Conservation Areas), Policy SCLP 11.3 (Historic Environment), Policy SCLP 11.1 (Design Quality), and the Walberswick Conservation Area Appraisal (Dec 2013) is also relevant.

SCLP 11.5 Conservation Areas: The Local Plan supports the objectives of National Planning Policy (NPFF 2021), which states that Heritage Assets should be conserved, including Non-designated Heritage Assets.

Clause b). States that proposals should **preserve or enhance** the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Clause c). States proposals should be of appropriate design, scale, form, height, massing and position.

The Application seeks to convert the ground floor, of the Northern extension, into living accommodation. This alteration would increase the visual scale of the whole property, in sharp contrast to those in the surrounding Conservation Area.

The alteration would also reduce the secondary appearance of the extension, in relation to the original built form of the cottages.

The use of contemporary folding doors, highly visible on the front elevation, is not appropriate design in this area.

The proposed alterations would not preserve or enhance the Conservation Area.

SCLP 11.3 Historic Environment: States that development should make a positive contribution to the historic environment, and conserve or enhance the historic environment.

By increasing the visual scale of the property and reducing the contrast between the original cottages, and later additions, the Application does not conserve and enhance the historic environment.

SCLP 11.1 Design Quality:

Clause b). The clause states that proposals should understand the character of the built, historic, and natural environment and use this understanding to complement local character.

Clause c) i, states that the overall scale and character should clearly demonstrate consideration of its surroundings.

The proposal does not consider, or complement, the character of its surroundings and the proposed glass doors to a principal elevation are not an established feature of The Green or the Conservation Area.

Clause cii) states the layout should fit in well with the existing neighbourhood layout and respond to the way people and vehicles move around both internal and external to existing and proposed buildings.

Policy h) provide well integrated car parking and landscaping which create a high quality public realm and avoid a car dominated environment.

The property has 4 designated bedrooms, with the potential for 7 bedrooms. The Applicant states that 4 cars can be located on the front drive.

It appears that unobstructed access can only accommodate 2 cars. Given the potential occupancy it can be expected that parking will overspill onto the perimeter of The Green, the heart of the village.

The Application does not respond to vehicle movement and fit in well with its surroundings.

The Walberswick Conservation Area Appraisal (Dec 2013)

Records the importance and sensitivity of the Green, the heart of the Village and the most populated open space.

4. Comment

The proposed alterations are relatively minor. However, their visual impact is substantial in a highly sensitive location.

By reducing the secondary appearance of the north extension, it becomes more visually integrated into the main house. That alters the scale of the whole dwelling and increases its contrast to the surrounding houses.

In 2014 an Application was submitted with a similar frontage design. The Application was withdrawn.

5.0 Conclusion

The proposal is detrimental to Vine Cottage and the Conservation Area.