

Planning Advisory Group: report to Walberswick Parish Council

DC/20/5263/FUL

Samphire Cottage, The Green, Walberswick, Suffolk, IP18 6TX

REPLACEMENT HIPPED ROOF STRUCTURE (NEW MANSARD ROOF) TO RECONFIGURE FIRST FLOOR ACCOMMODATION AND SINGLE STOREY EXTENSIONS TO FORM NEW ENTRANCE FOYER AND EXTENSIONS TO EXISTING LOUNGE.

14/01/2021

1. Opinion

In the opinion of the Planning Advisory Group this application would cause harm to the Conservation Area and should be **refused**.

2. Description

Samphire Cottage is located on Hidden Lane, a private unmade road serving six houses. The Lane is in close proximity to The Green and access is via the car park road.

The property is located in the Conservation Area and the Appraisal describes this area as "*low dwellings crouching for protection behind sea defences.*"

Currently the property is a chalet type bungalow with a first floor comprising both pitched roofs and cubic like, full height, dormers. A flat roof covers a single storey arm which extends at the front of the house.

The resultant appearance is somewhat uncoordinated and the building fabric is stated to be in poor condition.

The proposal is to demolish the existing first floor roof structures and replace it with a Mansard roof. This would have a steeper pitch, with a flat section at the apex. The Mansard would be clad in slate tiles.

The proposed roof design would incorporate dormers and a full height structure on the Eastern elevation. This structure would extend beyond the main wall line and be supported on timber posts

It is also proposed to demolish an existing garage and extend the single storey wing by incorporating a new entrance lobby.

The resultant property would contain 10 bed spaces, housed in six bedrooms.

3. Policy background

Three policies from the Local Plan are particularly relevant here; Policy SCLP 11.1 (Design Quality), Policy SCLP 11.2 (Residential Amenity), and Policy SCLP 11.5 (Conservation Areas).

SCLP 11.1 Design Quality

Clause b). The clause states that proposals should complement local character.

Clause c) iv, states that proposals should demonstrate a clear relationship between buildings and spaces and the wider street scene or townscape.

Clause d) states that proposals should take into account important landscape features and retain and/or enhance existing landscaping and natural and semi-natural features on the site.

SCLP 11.2 Residential Amenity

Clause a) states that privacy and overlooking should not be compromised.

Clause c) states that access to daylight and sunlight should be protected

Clause d) states that protection should be afforded against noise and disturbance.

Policy SCLP 11.5 Conservation Areas

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

Specifically the Walberswick Conservation Area Appraisal (2013) states:

“The character of this section is very much of dwellings crouching for protection behind sea defences, an impression strengthened by the reduced level of the lane in relation to the adjoining roads. The lowness of these houses and the neighbouring Reedlings, also single storied and with a flat roof, corresponds to the horizontals of the surrounding sea walls and marshes, their small scale in dramatic contrast to the open landscapes beyond.”

4. Comment

The proposed Mansard Roof would substantially increase the mass and the physical presence of the property, and this increase would contrast with neighbouring low lying properties. The height of this roof is not dimensioned on the Application drawings.

The Conservation Appraisal specifically cites the importance of maintaining a low lying character and it's relation to the horizontal landscape features which define this area.

The visual impact of the Mansard roof is further emphasised by a substantial full height feature located on the eastern elevation. The combined impact would be visible from the raised sea defences.

The additional mass would also affect neighbouring properties. To the North the development extends close to the boundary shared with Longfield. The increased mass would induce a sense of enclosure and would reduce daylight and sunlight to the rear of this property.

The proposal also introduces problems of overlooking and privacy. The rear of Longfield would be overlooked, although this could be overcome with obscured glazed windows to stairs and bathroom.

More serious is the overlooking of Creek Cottage to the South. Currently an artist studio does overlook this property. However, with increased occupancy this problem would be intensified, and two bedrooms would have direct views into the rear rooms and garden of the Cottage.

Problems of noise and disturbance are also likely. Currently the property would seem to function as a modest family home. The proposal is for 6 bedrooms, housing up to 10 occupants. This increased occupancy is likely to disturb neighbouring houses and increased traffic flow would be inappropriate in this quietest of back lanes.

Hidden Lane has a very narrow appearance. Currently the garage does visually intrude into this space. However, demolition and extension of the house can only intensify this intrusion and further divide this narrow access into segments.

5.0 Conclusion

The proposed works do not satisfy SCLP policy in that they are harmful and unsympathetic to the surrounding environment and neighbour amenity.

Nor do they comply with the Conservation Area Appraisal which specifically describes this area as low lying houses set at a reduced level and responding to the horizontal landscape features.

Alteration could be beneficial, and the building fabric is in poor condition. However, such alteration must be appropriate.

Two members of the Group declared an interest in the application and did not participate in the review.

