

Planning Advisory Group: Report to Walberswick Parish Council

Planning Application: ref DC/17/4247/FUL

1 Anchor Cottages, The Street, Walberswick IP18 6UA

31.10. 2017

In the opinion of the Planning Advisory Group this application is contrary to the policies of the Local Plan and should be refused.

Comment

1 The property is one of a pair of 18th century cottages, prominently sited in the Conservation Area opposite the Anchor Hotel. The cottages make a positive contribution to the character of the area as noted in the Conservation Area Appraisal. 1 Anchor Cottages has been the subject of two recent planning applications, the first to create a new driveway from The Street and the second for significant alterations to the house and the construction of a large single storey extension to the side and rear. Both applications were approved despite opposition from the Parish Council, adjoining neighbours and others.

2 The current application proposes to demolish the existing house in its entirety and to 'rebuild in the same form with minor changes' incorporating the alterations and extensions already approved. The justification given for the demolition refers to inadequate foundations to the front and gable wall of the house, lack of support for the ground and upper floors in this area and the absence of thermal and sound insulation.

3 No structural engineer's report has been submitted to substantiate these concerns or to assess the feasibility of repair but it is certain that the measures required to restore the building will fall within the scope of normal conservation practice. Indeed, under paragraph 9 of the application form, it is specifically stated that 'Although it is possible to repair the building, the fabric is of no significance and its replacement with an identical building will not materially impact on the character of the Conservation Area'.

The statement misunderstands and misrepresents the purpose of Conservation Areas, which is to preserve as far as possible the special character and fabric of the historic environment, not to create a facsimile of the past.

4 The Design Statement submitted by the applicant states that the proposal has been granted full planning permission (ref 17/0800). This is not the case. In addition to the demolition of the house, the following changes to the approved drawings have been made:

- The width of the house will be increased by 300mm

- The new pitched roofs to the rear will be raised (no dimensions given)
- The footprint of the single storey extension is significantly varied
- A new curved canopy with LED lighting (not noted on the drawing) is to be built over the principal entrance at the junction of the house and the extension.

This will be a significant source of light pollution

- Various windows have been altered in size and location and what appears to be a new door gives access from bedroom 2 to the (unguarded) flat roof.

A roof terrace here, if this is what is envisaged, will detract from the privacy of neighbouring homes and gardens.

- The beech hedge screening the single storey additions has been moved forward, reducing the width of building it obscures

Conclusion

5 No 1 Anchor Cottages is a rare and little altered 18th century dwelling which meets at least three of Suffolk Coastal District Council's criteria for a 'non-designated heritage asset' namely 'Aesthetic Value', 'Integrity' and 'Rarity'. The application shows no recognition of the worth of the building or its value to the Conservation Area and does not provide sufficient reason for its demolition.

The additional changes to the consent 17/0800 should be the subject of a revised application rather than deemed to be approved as argued by the applicant.

6 For these reasons, the Planning Advisory Group considers the application should be refused.

One member of the Planning Advisory Group declared an interest and did not participate in these discussions

