

DC/23/3527/FUL

1 Adams Lane, Walberswick, Suffolk, IP18 6UR

“Re-establish a driveway / access point to the property”.

03.10.23

1. Opinion

In the opinion of the PAG this application should be **refused**.

2. Description

The application proposes a new vehicular entrance to the south of the site, connecting an existing garden area with the B1387 (The Street).

The application also proposes increasing the number of on-site parking spaces from 1 to 2.

3. Comment

The application site is outside the Walberswick Conservation Area, although on entering the village both the site and the Conservation Area are seen in the same view and therefore share some form of visual relationship.

The site is located within the Suffolk Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

The application suggests that the proposed drive is a reinstatement of an access that existed approximately 25 years ago. No evidence to support this has been supplied, and Google earth (1999) shows no such arrangement.



Google Earth, 1999, showing the proposed site (circled) with established hedge, and without a drive access to the south.

The property is currently served by an existing vehicular access via Adams Lane. There is also a separate pedestrian access to the west of the site. Located opposite No's 1 to 5 Adams Lane (houses which also lack vehicle access points) are a number of parking spaces (approximately 6-8) for residents and visitors. The need for the additional drive and parking has not been provided.

The application will need to satisfy Highways criteria and a drawing has been supplied showing a 4.5m wide entrance, set 6m back from The Street, with visibility splays of 11m width at the point where the grass verge abuts the road. This is proposed to be located in close proximity to the entrance to Adams Lane. Notwithstanding the physical creation of the opening for the gates and splay (which has a detrimental impact on the street scene as described), there is concern about the highway safety aspect of the proposal. There are three other access points, including Adams Lane, within 30metres, just as The Street transitions from 30mph to 20 mph. Adding an additional access point would endanger highway safety at this location.

The new access would require the removal of a sizeable section of grass verge and hedge, containing a number of trees, and destroying potential habitat. The application form states that no important biodiversity on or near the site is likely to be affected by the proposals, yet this is unsubstantiated, and the claim is a surprising one given the age and maturity of the hedge / trees to be removed, and the proximity to open countryside and common. The application is therefore contrary to **SCLP 10.1 Biodiversity and Geodiversity**.

Part of the garden will be lost to the creation of the drive and two on-site parking spaces although details regarding the location of these, dimensions, turning, etc, and compliance with the **Suffolk Guidance for Parking (2014)** have not been provided.

A vehicular opening onto The Street would erode the rural character and 'green corridor' currently enjoyed when travelling from open countryside into the Conservation Area, and would harm the AONB, contrary to **SCLP 10.4 Landscape Character**.



Looking east along The Street. Application site to the left (by grass verge and trees). The hedges and trees make a positive contribution to the rural approach to the village and Conservation Area, as well as potentially providing habitat. Note the wide entrance splay to Adams Lane (left) and the close proximity of the splay to the application site. Image: Streetview, 2022.



Parking arrangements to the west of the site, in close proximity to the pedestrian entrance gate to No1 Adams Lane, in addition to the rear vehicular access to the north. Image: Streetview, 2022.

4. Summary

The potential impact this proposal would have on biodiversity has not been assessed which is contrary to **SCLP 10.1 Biodiversity and Geodiversity**.

The proposals amount to significant change to the rural quality around the proposed site, with significant loss of hedge, grass verge, trees and garden amenity, all of which contribute positively to the 'green corridor' approach to the village and the transition from open countryside to settlement. The proposal would cause harm the AONB and is therefore contrary to **SCLP 10.4 Landscape Character**.