

Planning Advisory Group: Report to Walberswick Parish Council

Planning Application ref DC/16/3697/FUL
Admiral House, The Street, Walberswick IP18UE

2.02.2016

1 The application seeks retrospective planning consent for the construction of four retaining walls adjoining the public highway in the garden of Admiral House. Two of the walls flank the drive to the garage at the rear of the plot. Two other, shorter walls flank steps to a reconstructed footpath leading to the front door.

Admiral House lies within the Walberswick Conservation Area. The garden is visible from The Street, both close by and when viewed from the east where the road bends round from the green.

2 The design of garden walls, paths and gateways is a valuable element of the Arts and Crafts heritage of the village. The Street is one of several locations where this influence can be seen. The entrances to the immediately adjoining houses Shrublands, The Mercer's Hall and Dutch House display characteristic Arts and Crafts features: narrow, secretive ways-in, simple detailing, unobtrusive brick and flint walls, steps and paths made of varying patterns of bricks, tiles and cobbles. Altogether the effect shows sensitivity to scale, detail and the quality of materials.

3 The new work at Admiral House has none of these subtleties: the width of the entrance gateway and the path beyond is more than twice that of similar entrances to adjacent properties, the heights of the walls is excessive, the choice of a variegated brick does not relate to the Suffolk Reds widely used in village gardens of this period and the large cream coloured paving slabs are alien in scale, colour and material. The result is obtrusive, out of context and detrimental to the quality of the Conservation Area.

4 It is unfortunate that pre-emptive action has denied the village the opportunity to examine the proposals before construction and to request improvements.