

Planning Advisory Group: Report to Walberswick Parish Council

Planning Application ref DC/16/4406/FUL
Spindrift, Lodge Road, Walberswick IP18 6UF

15.11.2016

1 Spindrift is a semi-detached house on the north side of Lodge Road close to the western boundary of the village envelope. The house is joined to Illanga of which it was formerly a part before the properties were subdivided. This end of Lodge Road lies outside the Conservation Area.

2 The site has a long planning history culminating, in November 2015, in the refusal on appeal of an application to replace the existing garages with a two storey house. The main reason for the refusal was the 'effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the street scene'. The inspector's report referred to the pleasant, open, spacious landscaped character of the area created by 'generous spacing around relatively large houses with mature planting'.

The new application is to erect a 1 1/2 storey dwelling in the rear garden of Spindrift, accessed from the existing driveway. The house will comprise three double bedrooms and a raised central section for living, dining and kitchen.

As with the previous application, the Design and Access Statement claims the site is suitable for development but otherwise offers no explanation or justification for the proposal.

3 The application is subject to the provisions of Policy DM7 of the Local Plan, which regulates infilling and backland development. The object is to ensure that development is permitted only where it does not erode the character of the area, significantly reduce residential amenity or fail to provide a reasonable curtilage for the existing and proposed dwellings. Against these conditions, the Planning Advisory Group comments as follows:

3.1 The subdivision required to create the new development site will reduce the rear garden of Spindrift by more than 75%. This is not a reasonably sized curtilage, particularly given the scale of surrounding gardens.

3.2 The footprint of the proposed development, together with its road and hardstandings takes up almost half the area of the new site. In comparison, the adjoining house Westwick (cited as a precedent for backland development in this area) sits on a generous plot with a footprint one quarter that of the new house.

No drawings have been provided to show the new development in its context but it is inevitable that the increase in density will erode the open character of the area described in the inspector's report.

3.3 The house, in particular the raised central section, will be visible from adjoining properties and will cause some overshadowing of gardens. Its closeness to the

eastern boundary (less than 4 metres), and potential overlooking by bedroom and bathroom windows on that elevation will detract from the seclusion of Westwick.

The absence of key dimensions such as eaves and ridge heights and the lack of context drawings, make it difficult to assess these relationships but clearly the proximity of the new house will detract from the amenity and privacy of adjoining properties.

3.3 Vehicular access, parking and manoeuvring space (not adequate in area as drawn) will also be a source of disturbance to neighbours. Parking provision is confusingly described in the Design and Access Statement as being both in front of and behind the existing garages: this needs clarification.

3.4 The design of the single storey elements of the house is restrained whereas the fully glazed west elevation is over scaled and obtrusive. The proposed use of standing seam zinc as a roof material is not typical of the area but does allow a lower pitch and therefore a less visible roof.

4 The applicant claims in the Design and Access Statement that the 'previous appeal on the site advised that the site was suitable under SCDC [rules] for [an] additional dwelling' provided it had minimal impact on the street scene. In fact, the inspector's report makes no such statement.

In the opinion of the Planning Advisory Group, the application does not meet the requirements of policy DM7 and is not acceptable.