

## Planning Advisory Group: report to Walberswick Parish Council

DC/21/4153/FUL

The Thatched Cottage, The Street, Walberswick, IP18 6UE

### PROPOSED REAR EXTENSION, INTERNAL ALTERATIONS, AND REPLACEMENT GARAGING / GARDEN STORE / GREENHOUSE

27/09/2021

#### 1. Opinion

In the opinion of the Planning Advisory Group the proposed works are detrimental to the existing property (a non-designated heritage asset), the Conservation Area (a designated heritage asset) and the setting of Listed Buildings and should be **refused**.

#### 2. Description

The Thatched Cottage is one of the oldest surviving buildings in Walberswick. Evidence shows that it existed in 1749, being one of the few buildings to survive a major fire.

Located in the historic heart of the Village, it forms part of an important group of houses, including Mercers Hall and The Old Corner House, both Grade 2 Listed buildings. Other properties are identified as making a positive contribution to the Conservation Area.

The Conservation Area Appraisal states: *“a pleasing group of houses centred around the junction of the Street and Leveretts Lane (to the north) and a footpath (to the south), and include The Old Corner Shop, Wayland Cottage, and Thatched Cottage.”*

In 1952, following another fire, the property was extensively rebuilt by the renowned Architect, Ernst L Freud. The roof was re-thatched and an eyebrow dormer added. A rear extension was constructed and a chimney stack added to the west elevation.

In view of the fact that it is one of the oldest surviving houses in the village and that it has been extensively rebuilt by the eminent and local architect Ernst Freud, The Thatched Cottage should be deemed to have non-designated heritage status.

In 1954, a new access was formed

In, 1971 a single storey west extension was added.

The property is currently a 5 bedroom house. It is proposed to enlarge an existing rear extension thereby increasing the size of the living and sleeping accommodation.

The extension will incorporate a new eyebrow dormer within a thatched roof. The footprint of the rear extensions would exceed that of the original property.

Alterations to the existing rear extension are also proposed. The attractive covered terrace and rear entrance detailing would be lost.

The site entrance is to be redesigned; the gated access is to be set back from the boundary and existing vegetation will be removed.

It is also proposed to demolish the existing garaging and stores and replace them with a 2 bay open carport, store and greenhouse. The proposed construction would double the area of the existing outbuildings.

### **3. Policy background**

Four policies from the Local Plan are particularly relevant here; Policy SCLP 11.5 (Conservation Areas), Policy SCLP 11.3 (Historic Environment), Policy SCLP 11.1 (Design Quality), Policy SCLP 11.4 (Listed Buildings) and the Walberswick Conservation Area Appraisal (Dec 2013) is also relevant.

**SCLP 11.5 Conservation Areas:** The Local Plan supports the objectives of National Planning Policy (NPPF 2021), which states that Heritage Assets should be conserved, including Non-designated Heritage Assets.

Clause b). States that proposals should **preserve or enhance** the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

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

Clause d) states, retain features important to the settlement form and pattern.

**SCLP 11.3 Historic Environment:** States that development should make a positive contribution to the historic environment.

#### **SCLP 11.1 Design Quality:**

Clause b). The clause states that proposals should understand the character of the built, historic, and natural environment and use this understanding to complement local character.

Clause c) i states that the overall scale and character should clearly demonstrate consideration of its surroundings.

Clause c) iii states that the height and massing of developments should relate to their surroundings.

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

## **SCLP 11.4 Listed Buildings:**

Clause c) states that development affecting the setting of Listed Buildings should be of appropriate scale form height and massing

The Walberswick Conservation Area Appraisal (Dec 2013) states the need to enhance and protect Conservation Areas.

### **4. Comment**

The Thatched Cottage is located within a Conservation Area (a designated heritage asset), and it is identified with the Walberswick Conservation Area appraisal as contributing positively to the conservation area / designated heritage asset, and consequently the property itself is a non-designated heritage asset (NDHA).

The Agent has supplied extensive research into the property and the surrounding historic core of Walberswick. It is argued that locating the extension to the rear of the property, a continuation of what exists, lessens the impact. However, the impact of the proposed works is underestimated.

The existing rear extension is already visible from the public domain, with views from The Street and a public footpath running alongside the western boundary.

It is proposed to double the length of the rear extension, whilst maintaining the ridge height of the original house, thereby substantially increasing the visual impact of that feature. The existing gable and rear extension are virtually in the same plane and will appear as one.

The length and height of the side elevation of the house would rival the front elevation, and would no longer be subservient to the main house, establishing a challenging hierarchy between the original cottage and the rear wing. The footprint of the rear extensions would exceed that of the original property and detrimentally increase the mass of the property when viewed from the public domain. A modest cottage would have the appearance of a large dwelling, with two equal wings and a bulky square plan form.

The resultant house would be out of scale to neighbouring properties, two of which are Grade 2 listed.

It is also proposed to introduce an eyebrow dormer to the rear wing, copying the same feature to the front elevation of the cottage. This 'mirroring' of detailing and form would have a major and detrimental visual impact, confusing the hierarchy and phasing of the cottage.

Areas of vegetation would be removed increasing the visibility of the works.

Views from The Street would also be affected by the proposed outbuildings. These built forms are higher and twice the width of the existing and with the rear extension, repositioned entrance gates and proposed outbuildings a very urban appearance would be established. Proposed tree removal and increased hard standing would only add to that urbanised appearance. Such works would be detrimental to the street scene and Conservation Area.

## **5.0 Conclusion**

The proposal does not enhance the Conservation Area and is contrary to the policies set out in section 3.0 of this report. The proposed work would have an adverse effect on the existing house, its setting, and street views within the historic core of the village. The proposals would also impact the setting of Grade II Listed Buildings.