

Planning Advisory Group: report to Walberswick Parish Council

DC/23/1423/FUL

“Re-surfacing of part of Village Hall car park”.

Village Hall, The Street, Walberswick, Southwold, Suffolk, IP18 6UA

05/05/2023

1. Opinion

In the opinion of the Planning Advisory Group this application can be **approved**, subject to consideration being given to the points raised below in Section 3.

2. Description

It is proposed to resurface part of the car park to the north west of the Village Hall. This area is currently a mix of grass and a tarmac access strip. It is proposed to replace the grassed areas with a hot bitumen and gravel parking surface. The application mentions the removal of shrubs and vegetation and laying 85 linear metres of concrete edging kerb stones.

The site lies within the Walberswick Conservation Area and the Suffolk Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

3. Comment and Conclusion

The Village Hall is valued village asset and improvement of this facility is welcomed. However, the materials proposed give rise to some concern.

The Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan states that: *“Hard edges, such as concrete kerbstones should not replace the softer grass verge, as the former is... a feature of a suburban environment”* (p20, para 5), and further describes concrete kerbs as being elements that *“undermine the traditional qualities of the Conservation Area”* (p52, para 4). This element of the application should therefore be re-thought.

The extent of shrub and vegetation removal referred to under ‘4. Trees and hedges’ of the submitted supporting statement should also be clarified.

The permeability of the hot bitumen and gravel wearing surface should be ascertained and / or an alternative considered, such as a permeable ‘grid and gravel’ arrangement - an approach aligned with the parking treatment at the recently completed and exemplary Castle Community Rooms, Framlingham.