

Observations of the Planning Advisory Group on the Pump House Planning Appeal

*Planning Advisory Group: Report to Walberswick Parish Council*

*Planning Application ref DC/13/2130/FUL*

*Planning Appeal ref APP/J3530/A/14/2220357*

*The Pump House, The Green, Walberswick*

02.09.2014

*Comment*

*1 This application, to extend and convert The Pump House to provide a live/work unit, was refused planning consent by Suffolk Coastal District Council (SCDC) in July 2013. The reason given for the refusal was the undesirability of introducing further residential accommodation into an area of long term flood risk. The applicant has appealed the decision and the application will now be determined by the Secretary of State.*

*The Parish Council made no comment on the original application, in accordance with its policy at that time. Letters of objection were submitted by four local residents, disputing, amongst other matters, the applicant's claim that the provision of residential accommodation is necessary to make The Pump House commercially viable and expressing concern that this partial change of use might prove the first step in converting the premises from retail use to holiday accommodation.*

*The following comments deal with considerations other than flood risk which is a matter of national planning policy.*

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*2 In December 2013, subsequent to the refusal of this application, SCDC approved the Walberswick Conservation Area Appraisal. The Appraisal identified The Potters Wheel, the adjoining shop premises and The Pump House as a group of unlisted buildings, described as 'simple hut structures.....', that contribute positively to the character of the Green. A photograph of the three buildings was included in the Appraisal.*

*In order to provide the additional space required for the residential unit, it is proposed to raise and offset part of the roof of the existing building and to widen the rear half of the plan. These extensions will detract from the simple character of the Pump House noted in the Appraisal and its relationship to The Parish Lantern, the adjacent Grade 2 listed building.*

*3 The economic case proposed to justify part change to residential use is not convincing. It is not consistent with the experience of other businesses along the Green, none of which have or require live in accommodation for their viability. The conversion will reduce the retail area by more than a third and substantially add to the cost of renovation. The concern is that, as expressed by the objectors, the residential element will in due course take over the whole building. Residential accommodation amongst the otherwise exclusively commercial properties in this location would not be appropriate.*