

Planning Advisory Group: Report to Walberswick Parish Council

17 March 2017

Planning Application Ref. No: DC/17/0800/FUL
1 Anchor Cottages, The Street, Walberswick IP18 6UA
Rear Extension to existing semi-detached cottage

1 This application in fact relates not just to a rear extension, but also to a side extension, dormer windows, additional windows and a porch addition to the front (street facing) elevation.

2 This property is one of the pair of 18th century cottages which occupy a visible and public location in the Conservation Area opposite the Anchor Hotel. Projecting forward of the line of the neighbouring Terrace to the east, Anchor Cottage and its garden can be seen both at close hand and from a distance. The cottages are described in the Conservation Area Appraisal as 'unlisted buildings that contribute to the character of The Street'.

As the cottage exists, it could potentially meet at least three of Suffolk Coastal District Council's criteria for a 'non-designated heritage asset', namely 'Aesthetic Value', 'Integrity', 'Rarity' and possibly 'Association'. No. 1 Anchor Cottages is a rare and little altered mid to late 18th century cottage.

3 One of the proposals is to construct a substantial extension to the rear and side of the existing house (having roughly the same footprint as the existing house). This involves (a) replacing a single storey block by an extension some 5 metres deep and 5 metres wide to the rear of the main cottage with a pitched roof which is about 900mm lower than the existing roof and (b) building a flat roofed L shaped extension overall approximately 10m x 12m.

A drive is proposed which will extend into the back garden. (No information is provided about the layout of the drive beyond the back of the extension.) This drive is hard against the east boundary of the site, which in turn is hard against the road serving the rear of the neighbouring Terrace.

4 The Core Strategy of the Local Plan requires development within a Conservation Area to 'maintain and enhance the quality of the distinctive natural and built environment'. The Conservation Area Management Plan specifically refers to the importance of the street scene in determining the character of the Conservation Area and the detrimental effect amongst others of 'intrusive....driveways.... and other structures'.

In this context, the Planning Advisory Group comments as follows:

In the opinion of the Planning Advisory Group, the proposal will be harmful to the character of the Conservation Area and is in conflict with the objectives of the Local Plan for the following reasons:

- 1 No 1 Anchor Cottage is one of a pair of attractive cottages with a small-scaled character. The proposal to double its footprint would have the effect of transforming it into a large house which would overwhelm its other half. The rather alien character of the flat roofed extension would butt against the existing cottage in an unsympathetic and unresolved manner.
- 2 The pitched roof enlargement would result in a loss of sun- and day-light into the garden of its neighbour no 2.
- 3 The driveway being hard against the boundary would result in a loss of the very attractive hedge to the length of the east boundary making the proposal all too visible to the public.
- 4 The porch would intrude into the beautiful low-key front of the cottage.
- 5 The proposed dormers and other additional window openings would detract from the simplicity of the existing house.
- 6 The proposed fence between No1 and No2 is regrettable, and would be better replaced with a mixed hedge, as encouraged on page 20 of the Walberswick Conservation Area appraisal.
- 7 Developments such as this tend to turn what is a genuine village character into a suburban one.

For these reasons the PAG considers the application should be rejected.