

Planning Advisory Group: Report to Walberswick Parish Council

Planning Application ref DC/18/2083/FUL

Garden Studio and Minor Alterations to The Hut, The Lea, Walberswick IP18 6TR

19.06.2018

1 Opinion

In the opinion of the Planning Advisory Group, the application is not detrimental to the Conservation Area and can be approved, subject to the requirements of the Environment Agency regarding flood protection and a condition restricting the use of the proposed studio as ancillary to The Hut.

Given the narrowness of The Lea, a temporary condition should be imposed for the construction period controlling the access and parking of contractors' vehicles.

2 Introduction

The Hut is one of a scatter of small houses within the Conservation Area accessible from The Lea and directly overlooking Robinson Marsh. The house can be seen from the nearby footpath across the Marsh to Bennetts Drift but is otherwise barely visible. The site lies within Flood Zone 3 (high probability of flooding) of the Environment Agency's Flood Map for Planning and has been subject to occasional inundation, most recently in 2013. The application is supported by a Flood Risk Assessment as required by national planning policy.

The Hut is an unusual and attractive house, described in the Conservation Area Appraisal as 'a single storey studio-like building with a distinctive Scandinavian character' It was converted and extended from a builder's store in the early 1960's by the architect Reginald Hyne and retains the simple and unobtrusive style of the period.

The house extends northwards from the narrow entrance to the site into a wider garden following the dyke to Robinson Marsh to reveal a dramatic panorama of Southwold and the River Blyth. The extension rises to a height of one and a half stories and has a conspicuous picture window in the gable. The roofs are pan tiled mono-pitches and the external walls are rendered.

A paved terrace along the west side of the building separates the house from a garden shed built against the boundary wall. This will provide the site for the proposed studio.

3 The Application

The proposal is to replace the garden shed with a larger timber framed studio and shower room, 19.2M² in area. The timber frame will be set on a raised concrete platform supported by brick perimeter walls to protect the building from flooding upsurge. Gaps in the walls will reduce the pressure of flood water passing through the site. Various other measures are proposed to mitigate the flood risk.

The studio roof will be a mono pitch, sloping towards the low eaves of the existing house. A rooflight and a large north facing window will bring light to the interior space. The roof and the east facing external walls will be clad in western red cedar shingles. The remaining walls will be in facing brickwork

3.1 The application also proposes small alterations to the existing building. The entrance door will be resited and the kitchen and bathroom replanned, the timber stable door which links the living room with the terrace will be replaced by a powder coated aluminium window and all other timber windows will be similarly replaced in metal.

4 Comment

4. The siting, scale and form of the new Studio will relate well to the existing house and to the wider landscape to form an interesting group of buildings. The height of the new roof will restrict to a small degree the view northwards from the adjoining house (Fen Cottage) and the large roof light may become a source of light pollution.

The proposed alterations to the existing building are not considered to raise significant planning issues in respect of the Conservation Area. However the removal of the stable door from the living room to the terrace, the substitution of metal for timber framed windows and the replanned entrance detract from the original character of The Hut and would benefit from further consideration.

4.2 In view of the small size of the development and the restricted access and parking space, the use of the Studio should be limited by planning condition to the ancillary function referred to in the application.

4.3 The issue of flooding is very relevant to this site and we assume that the application will be referred to the Environment Agency for assessment.

5 Conflict of Interest

A member of the Planning Advisory Group declared an interest in the application and did not participate in this review.

