

Planning Advisory Group: Report to Walberswick Parish Council

Planning Application ref DC/20/1341/FUL

Planning Application ref DC/20/1342/LBC

Demolitions, Redevelopment and Alterations at the Parish Lantern Walberswick IP18

1 Opinion

1.2 In the opinion of the Planning Advisory Group the application is not detrimental to the Conservation Area and can be approved, subject to (i) the Parish Council and the District Council being satisfied that the intensification of use will not be detrimental to the amenity of nearby houses and gardens and (ii) a satisfactory resolution of the matters raised in paragraph 3.4 below

1.3 In the opinion of the Planning Advisory Group the change of use of the upper floors for residential purposes can be approved provided it remains ancillary to the use of the Parish Lantern

2 Description

2.1 The Parish Lantern is within the Walberswick Conservation Area and is listed Grade 2. This application to carry out works to the building follows the withdrawal of an earlier submission, criticised for a lack of information in the mandatory Heritage Statement. A revised Statement has now been submitted with some additional information.

2.2 The proposal seeks to redevelop the courtyard at the rear of the Parish Lantern by demolishing the single storey extensions and constructing an enlarged tea room. A range of outbuildings along the western boundary will be converted to provide storage, accessible disabled facilities and a covered sitting area. Other minor alterations are proposed within the house to improve the functioning of the retail and catering operations.

2.3 The proposed tea room will have a low pitched trapezoidal roof with a roof light at its apex. Bi-fold doors will open onto the courtyard linking internal and external spaces. The walls and roof will be clad in Corten weathering steel.

2.4 The application seeks a change of use for the upper floors of the Parish Lantern from retail to residential and permission to convert these spaces into a three bedroom maisonette.

2.5 The dormer windows on the west elevation will be increased in width and in height, the side cheeks glazed and the windows fronted with so called 'Juliet balconies'. Two additional roof lights will be introduced and a roof terrace will be formed over the ground floor toilet.

3 Comment

3.1 The proposed building is well sited within the courtyard. The interesting trapezoidal form relates to the geometry of the site and minimises the height of the roof and the extent of the abutment to the house. The courtyard is screened from its surroundings by existing buildings and substantial fencing. The new building will be glimpsed from various angles around the green but will not detract from the significant views of the Conservation Area.

3.2 The extension will increase the single storey footprint in the courtyard by about 21m² (20%). The form and scale of the extension will not threaten the relationship with the existing building which will remain the dominant element on the site, in accordance with policy DM21.

3.3 Corten steel is an unfamiliar material in Walberswick but the proposed location and scale of the extension should ensure that its use will not cause harm to the listed building or to the Conservation Area

3.4 The enlargement of the dormer windows in width and height on the west elevation, the additional roof lights and the Juliet balconies do not address the concerns raised in the Conservation Officer's report on the previous application. The report noted the 'visual complexity' of the proposal and the high visibility of the roofscape from where Leveretts Lane enters the green. The scale of the proposals will have a detrimental effect on the elevation of a listed building (DM21) and the balconies risk infringing the privacy of adjoining gardens (DM23).

3.5 The proposed change of use reflects the difficulty of finding a viable retail function for the upper floors and the more general trend towards online shopping. At various times in the past the rooms have been used for residential purposes and the proposal to revert to that function is not considered detrimental.

4 Conclusion

In the opinion of PAG the proposed replacement of the existing structures in the courtyard is an imaginative response which should benefit the long-term commercial viability of The Parish Lantern. The scale and form of the proposals is not considered harmful to the listed building or to the Conservation Area

However, the matters referred to in paragraph 3.4 above will cause harm to the listed building, to views within the Conservation Area and to the amenity of neighbouring properties, in conflict with policies DM21 and DM23. These elements must be reconsidered before planning or listed building consent can be granted.

