

DC/23/3115/FUL

Seacroft, Millfield Road, Walberswick, Suffolk, IP18 6UD

“Part demolition, refurbishment and extension of an existing single family home”.

30/08/2023

1. Opinion

In the opinion of the Planning Advisory Group this application should be **withdrawn** and the comments below relating to materials, landscape and residential amenity addressed by the applicant / agent.

2. Description

Seacroft is a sizeable detached dwelling, dating from the early to mid 1970s, accessed from a shared driveway. Millfield Road is a private lane with houses of varying dates, including large villas designed by Frank Jennings and other notable arts and crafts architects.

The property and its sizeable garden are located within the Walberswick Conservation Area and the Suffolk Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

It is proposed to part demolish the existing property and to extend the retained house to the west creating a 5 bedroom house with detached 3 bay car garaging with separate workshop and WC.

The Design & Access Statement mentions that the dwelling *“will continue to be occupied by a single family as a holiday home”* (p20).

3. Comment and Relevant Policy

The house to be part demolished has no architectural or historic merit, and is currently well-screened by trees from the main sweep of Millfield Road. The house and its treed surroundings are visible in long views from the AONB, particularly to the south of the site, and form part of a larger cluster of trees and an important backdrop to the beach, marshes and also the public footpath to the southern boundary of the site.

The proposal looks to create a sizeable dwelling, commensurate with some of the existing larger dwellings on Millfield Road, although the effect that nearly doubling the size of the property will have on neighbours needs to be carefully assessed. The Design & Access Statement contains conflicting comments between the planning officer and the agent regarding the total percentage increase of the proposal, and this should be clarified.

Of concern is the lack of a detailed landscape proposal and strategy, and it is requested that this is supplied to facilitate understanding regarding what trees are to be retained, the extent of any tree works proposed, and any replanting on the site. If correctly handled tree retention / replanting has the potential to greatly reduce the impact this development could have on

views from the road, from the footpath and dunes to the south and from the neighbouring properties The Beeches, Seaspray, Rippleway and Millstones. Until detailed information relating to landscape is supplied the application does not satisfy **SCLP 11.1: Design Quality**, sub-section **i**.

Roofscapes are important in long views of the village and Conservation Area, often being the only element visible above hedges and trees. The lack of proposed rooflights and dormers to the south facing roof pitch is a welcome element of the design, particularly in a village that values its dark skies. However, the impact of light spillage from the north facing clerestory window, located just below the ridge, should be assessed against policy **SCLP 11.2: Residential Amenity**, sub-section **f**.

The proposed material palette does not display an understanding of village vernacular design and detailing, with materials such as zinc and Purbeck stone being inconsistent with the Conservation Area. The examples cited as 'precedents' within the Design & Access Statement are not from Walberswick, and the proposed 'dark brick' is an inappropriate choice in a Conservation Area where 'Suffolk red' bricks are often seen. Consequently, the proposed materials should be reconsidered so that the proposal satisfies **SCLP 11.1: Design Quality**, sub-sections **b** and **c (v)** and **SCLP 11.5: Conservation Areas**, sub-section **e**.

The footprint of the proposed house will maintain the existing boundary distance to the east (with The Beeches), but the extended form means the house will sit in closer proximity to the west boundary (shared with Rippleway and Seaspray). The proposed glazed south west corner to the extension, lighting the main living area, is therefore an unfortunate one given the increased likelihood of light spillage, and is contrary to **SCLP 11.2: Residential Amenity**, sub-sections **e** and **f**.

Given the prominent location of the property within the AONB, this application should be referred to the AONB Planning Officer for comment.

4. Summary

This proposal does not satisfy Local Plan policy regarding materials, light pollution and landscape, and should be withdrawn and resubmitted with the information requested above.