

DC/24/1242/FUL

Herons, Church Field, Walberswick, Southwold, Suffolk IP18 6TG

“Replace existing dwelling with new sustainable dwelling and landscaped gardens”.

AMENDED PROPOSALS

September 2024

29.09.24

1. Opinion

In the opinion of the Parish Council, notwithstanding the proposed amendments, this application should be **refused**.

2. Description

The original proposal (submitted in May 2024) seeks to demolish an existing three-bedroom bungalow known as ‘Herons’ and replace it with a five-bedroom two storey property. The proposed property will sit at right angles to the footprint of the existing property, filling the site from South to North. The scheme also includes parking, an integrated garage, swimming pool, pond and associated landscaping.

Proposed amendments submitted in September 2024 **include the following:**

- Reduction in overall length of the new house as it faces the Common
- Reduced fenestration at first floor
- Slight reduction in ridge height
- Removal of a first-floor balcony

As a reminder of the context, Herons has a low-lying form which is particularly suited to its sensitive site, which forms a backdrop to the Common. Several of the houses on Church Field are also single storey with large gardens and this creates an open and spacious quality that is particularly evident around Herons and the properties to the West and South. Hedges and trees make a positive contribution to the quiet rural character of the lane.

3. Comment

PAG made comments to the original application on 9 May 2024, those comments are still valid. The following points are made in the light of the amendments to the application (summarised above). Inevitably the comments repeat some of the earlier points as the amendments do not make a significant difference to the overall impact.

An overall conclusion incorporating the effect of the amendments is given below at Section 4.

3.1 Impact

The proposal as amended is still a two-storey dwelling and is still located closer to the public footpath / track and Common than the existing bungalow. The additional storey, even with the very slightly reduced ridge height combined with this increased proximity will still have an overbearing impact on those using these public spaces. In addition, the siting of the new dwelling is far outside the established building line.

Despite the reduction in north / south length, the proposal still fills the site giving the impression that this building has been crammed in in order to meet the client's brief, without due regard or respect for its setting. No visuals have been provided to demonstrate the proposals impact from either Church Field or the public footpath.

The Preliminary Ecological Assessment paid scant regard to the potential impacts from this very prominent proposal on these designations. It suggests that because it is only one dwelling the impacts will be minimal. The size, massing, orientation, and extensive first floor glazing are still evident in the amended scheme. A Habitat Regulations Assessment should be carried out by East Suffolk Council to determine the detailed impact of this proposal on the adjacent Minsmere Heaths and Marshes Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Minsmere – Walberswick Special Protection Area (SPA) and the Walberswick – Minsmere Ramsar site.

The applicants propose automatic shading / internal blinds for the upstairs windows. The operation of such devices is not something which can be legally enforced without significant and onerous monitoring. Should the application be considered appropriate for approval by the local authority, a Lighting Plan should be conditioned prior to commencement on site or occupation to ensure appropriate lighting is installed to limit the impact on neighbouring dwellings, inhabitants, wildlife and the special sites identified above. However, the actual operation will again be difficult to monitor / enforce.

Whilst the balcony to the western elevation has been removed, there are still significant large floor to ceiling windows on this side. The impact on amenity of adjacent dwellings is discussed below at 3.4.

3.2 Design Quality

No amendments have been made which affect the original Parish Council comments.

3.3 Materials

No amendments have been made which affect the original Parish Council comments.

3.4 Amenity

Policy SCLP11.2: Residential Amenity

When considering the impact of development on residential amenity, the Council will have regard to the following:

- a) Privacy/overlooking;*
- b) Outlook;*
- c) Access to daylight and sunlight;*
- d) Noise and disturbance;*
- e) The resulting physical relationship with other properties;*
- f) Light spillage;*
- g) Air quality and other forms of pollution; and*
- h) Safety and security.*

Development will provide for adequate living conditions for future occupiers and will not cause an unacceptable loss of amenity for existing or future occupiers of development in the vicinity.

As can be seen from the description of the current dwelling (see section 2 above) and proposed dwelling, there is a significant change planned for the site. The change from one to two storeys, and the change in orientation of the proposed house (even with the reduced north / south length, will still have significantly detrimental effects on surrounding properties, particularly Brackenside to the West.

A large balcony was proposed facing West (Brackenside), this has been *removed* in the amendments, and is to be welcomed.

As proposed, Herons will still have the entire length of the house facing both Commonsides and Brackenside, rather than as currently just the blank gable ends. This will cause particular issues as the proposed house is to be 2-storey. The proposed elevations even as amended show significant areas of floor to ceiling glazing on the first floor, facing both East and West towards Commonsides and Brackenside respectively. There is still significant potential for light pollution from this first floor glazing, notwithstanding the technical shading mechanisms now proposed. (The impact on the designated nature conservation sites from light spill was referenced in the original comments). In addition the blinds will make no difference to the overlooking problem during daylight hours.

In terms of the Local Plan policy the application as presented / and amended is considered to be contrary to SCLP 11.2, clauses a), d), e), f) and h). These are still considered to be strong reasons for refusal.

4. Summary of the overall comments on the application / scheme including the effect of the amendments

A summary of the key points shows:

- The proposal still conflicts with the Conservation Area Appraisal at Section 8, where the importance of the rural setting of the Conservation Area is outlined.
- There is a detrimental impact on the character and potential enjoyment of the footpath adjacent to the site notwithstanding the reduction in size (and consequent increased distance from the Common) of the dwelling.
- The stock of smaller dwellings, especially bungalows, is severely depleted in Walberswick due to the unchecked permissions given for massive extensions or rebuilds. This is causing stresses within the housing market.
- The proposed new north / south orientation has little regard for the current setting of the dwellings adjacent.
- The Preliminary Ecological Assessment is inadequate. It does not properly address the potential impacts of the proposed dwelling on the adjacent SAC / SPA designations.
- If considered for approval a Lighting Plan should be conditioned to mitigate potential impacts on neighbouring dwellings, inhabitants, wildlife and the special sites identified, although any subsequent monitoring / enforcement is likely to be ineffectual.
- The size proposed, (almost double the existing), the orientation, and height will result in unacceptable visual impacts.
- The dominant roofscape, extensive forecourt parking, and siting of the swimming pool are out of place in this low key rural setting.
- The materials for the first floor, roof and the large format windows are ill suited to this location.
- The residential amenity of adjacent properties is still severely compromised by the 2-storey format, and extensive glazing.
- In summary the proposal contravenes a significant number of the clauses of policies SCLP 11.1 and SCLP 11.2

DC/24/3069/FUL

Lorne Cottages, The Green, Walberswick, Suffolk, IP18 6TP

Demolition of an existing part single / part two-storey rear extension and its replacement through the erection of a two-storey rear extension

17/09/2024

1. Opinion

1.1 In the opinion of the Parish Council East Suffolk must satisfy themselves that there is no detrimental impact on the residential amenity of the two neighbouring properties (Dunwich View and 2 Lorne Cottages) by way of overlooking before considering whether to approve the application. If such an assessment is not done then the Parish Council would suggest that the application is refused. In addition, there should be conditions stipulating frosted glass / non-opening casements be used in the windows facing the neighbours.

2. Description

2.1 The application is described as above. In summary the application proposes the demolition of the existing one / two storey extension and it's replacement by a two storey bay extension on a smaller footprint. The boundary wall / current side extension wall will be reduced in height.

2.2 The form of the two storey bay mirrors that already existing at 2 Lorne Cottages – the adjoining property.

2.3 Unusually the application will result in a slightly smaller total footprint once the development takes place.

3. Comment

3.1 The property faces The Green, and is within the Conservation Area. There are no alterations proposed to the front of the property. The materials proposed to be used are sympathetic to the locality and do not have an impact on the Conservation Area. It satisfies the clauses of policies SCLP11.1 and SCLP 11.5.

3.2 The aspect of the application which does cause concern however is the potential impact of overlooking into the private spaces of the adjacent properties (Dunwich View and 2 Lorne Cottages). The existing one and two- storey extensions to be demolished had no windows facing towards the neighbours. However, because the new extension is in the form of a canted bay it has angled windows on two sides which face directly to the neighbouring properties. These windows being at first floor

have a greater potential for overlooking into the gardens of those properties. Policy SCLP 11.2, clause a) is potentially compromised by the overlooking issue.

3.3 At the very least East Suffolk Council should expressly address the issue and satisfy itself that the degree of potential overlooking and loss of residential amenity that may result is not significant if it considers the proposal should be approved. It may be appropriate that the windows in the canted bay which face the neighbours should be half or fully frosted, and non-opening, and conditioned as such. This would mitigate the potential problem from the outset.

4. Summary

4.1 This is a modest proposal, acceptable in the locality in terms of form and materials, however a potential overlooking issue needs further consideration by East Suffolk Council to ensure compliance with Policy SCLP11.2, clause a).