

Planning Advisory Group: Report to Walberswick Parish Council

Planning Application ref DC/20/2064/FUL

- i) Alterations and extensions to create a tall Art Room at Westwood, Lodge Road
- ii) Reroof the garage with cedar shingles

1 Opinion

In the opinion of the Planning Advisory Group the application does not comply with planning policy DM 21 and should be refused

2 Description

2.1 West Wood occupies a large triangular site within the Conservation Area at the junction of Lodge Road and The Street. The house is formed of a terrace of three cottages dating from the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century. The Conservation Area Appraisal identifies West Wood as an unlisted building that makes a positive contribution to the Conservation Area'. Although much altered, the house retains a simple unpretentious character when viewed from Lodge Road.

2.2 West Wood was once the studio of the portrait painter Arthur Dacres Rendall who developed the gardens in the Arts and Crafts style in the early twentieth century. The gardens were included in Gertrude Jekyll and Lawrence Weaver's book 'Gardens for Small Houses'. West Wood also has historic links with the Tradescant family of London gardeners who occupied the site in the seventeenth century. The gardens have been extensively renovated over the past fifteen years.

2.3 Latterly, a large, two storey extension with a zinc clad Mansard roof has been added to the north elevation. Conspicuous from The Street and Palmers Lane, this substantial building is not shown on the drawings.

2.4 Other single storey, brick extensions to the east gable of West Wood accommodate an Art Room and study, screened from Lodge Road by a newly built 2.5m high cobbled boundary wall. The wall conceals another lean-to sculpture studio.

2.5 The intention is to extend the existing Art Room eastwards into the garden by 2m and to raise the roof to a so called 'cathedral ceiling' with a ridge height of 6.3m to create a tall space in which to exhibit the clients' collection of sculpture.

3 Comment

3.1 The proposal is subject to the provisions of clause DM 21 of the Local Plan. The policy emphasises the importance of context in considering extensions to buildings of architectural or historic interest and calls for designs that will ensure the original building remains the more dominant feature of the site.

3.2 In this case, the information required to make such an assessment is incomplete and potentially misleading. The drawing of the south elevation to Lodge Road shows only a small part of the frontage of the original house, there is no section through the proposed studio and, most importantly, the substantial zinc clad extension to the north is not shown. From the information which has been submitted, it would seem that the original house is in danger of being subsumed within these two dominant forms.

3.3 Policy DM 21 emphasises the need for proposals to relate well to the scale and character of their surrounding. Here, the proposal represents an abrupt change of scale and form which is alien to the character of the house and its setting.

4 Conclusion

4.1 In the opinion of the Planning Advisory Group the proposal does not comply with the provisions of policy DM21. The proposed Art Room, seen in conjunction with the zinc clad northern extension, will undermine the dominance of the original house and

4.2 The form and scale of the proposal is detrimental to the character of the house and its setting within the Conservation Area.

4.3 The application includes the proposal to reroof a thatched garage to the west of the house with cedar shingles. The change of material results from the long lead time required by thatchers and the advanced decay of the roof. PAG would prefer to see the original material reinstated but does not object to the proposed substitution

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